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Liisa Husu, Jeff Hearn, Anna-Maija Lämsä and Sinikka Vanhala

Editors

Leadership through the Gender Lens

Women and Men in Organisations

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Leadership through the Gender Lens: Women and Men in Organisations

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Preface

Leadership through the Gender Lens: Women and Men in Organisations

Liisa Husu, Jeff Hearn, Anna-Maija Lämsä, and Sinikka Vanhala

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The Ministry of Education-funded research and development “NASTA” project on women’s leadership organised the international Conference on: “Leadership through the Gender Lens: Women and Men in Organisations” on 22nd and 23rd October 2009 at Hanken School of Economics. NASTA is a three-university collaboration between Hanken School of Economics, Helsinki School of Economics, and Jyväskylä University. The project combines research, teaching development in business schools, and outreach work in the field of women and leadership in Finnish business, governmental and third sector organisations.

Leadership and management remain highly gendered. The differential relations of women and men to leadership and management are a key question for both theory and practice. Recent decades have seen a major international growth of studies on gender relations in leadership, organisations and management, in both empirical research and more general theoretical analysis. Recent research and discussion on the gendering of leadership have been influenced by debates on: feminism; recognition of women and women’s situations, experiences and voices in leadership; organisational culture and communication; divisions of labour, hierarchy, power and authority; imagery and symbolism; information technology; sexuality, harassment, bullying and violence in organisations; home-work relations; men and masculinities in leadership; globalization and transnational questions; intersectionality; and so on. Having said that, the vast majority of mainstream work on leadership retains little or no gender analysis. In most business schools and other universities the position of gender-explicit work on leadership is still not well established.

The “Leadership through the Gender Lens” international conference brought together critical analyses and debates on gender, leadership and management. How leadership and management are gendered can mean more gender equal or more gender unequal conditions for women and men. This includes how education and training can contribute to gendered leadership and management. The overall aim of the conference was to generate new thinking, policy and action about women, men, gender and leadership.

In the conference we sought to provide a creative forum for interaction between scholars and researchers on leadership, organisation and management, together with leaders of different kinds from business, government and community. Contributions were sought from a wide theoretical spectrum, including feminism, equality studies, intersectional studies, organisation and management studies, business studies, postcolonial studies, sociology, industrial relations, marketing, entrepreneurship, innovation studies, education, and philosophy. The presentation of case studies, ethnographies, action research projects and innovative research methodologies was encouraged, as were contributions by and directed towards managers and practitioners.

Fifty-six papers were accepted from 18 countries, from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and Northern America. The full list of the accepted papers is included at the end of this text. Three keynote presentations were made by Professor Anna Wahl (Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden), Professor Albert J. Mills (St. Mary’s University, Halifax, Canada), and jointly Professor Susan Vinnicombe and Dr Ruth Sealy (Cranfield University, UK). In addition, papers were presented in five parallel conference streams: careers; higher education and culture; leadership; public sector and NGOs; and change – altogether 15 sessions. This volume is organised in three main sections, on: careers and leadership; management, hierarchy and leadership: and interventions in leadership.

The conference was closed by a final panel chaired by the television journalist Bettina Sångbom, and comprising businesswoman, author and lecturer Lenita Airsto, Deputy City Mayor and ex-Minister Tuula Haatainen, Dr Pauli Juuti, Director from JTO (School of Management), and Johanna Saarinen, Head of Competence and Talent Management from Kone Corporation. The panel addressed questions of women and leadership in both theory and practice. The conference was closed by Director Anita Lehtikoinen from the Ministry of Education. The social programme included a City of Helsinki reception at the Old Court House on Helsinki Senate Square, hosted by

Deputy City Mayor Tuula Haatainen. A total of more than 150 people attended the conference.

There are a number of people we would like to thank for their hard work, which made it possible for the conference to take place in the first place and then this book to materialise. First, we thank the Ministry of Education for their generous support, and City of Helsinki for hosting the reception. Next, there are the other members of the NASTA project team – Marianne Ekonen, Marjut Jyrkinen, Kirsi LaPointe, Charlotta Niemistö, and Suvi Välimäki – who were a key part of the planning of the conference. They were supplemented in the conference organisation by Tricia Cleland, Linda Sandbacka, Outi Sundström and Christa Tattari. Special thanks are due to Tina Karme for her massive practical work for the conference on matters, small and large. We also thank Marianne Stenius and Veronica Liljander, Rector and Vice-Rector at Hanken, for their support of the conference. In addition, we thank Minna Hiillos, the former NASTA project manager, and former NASTA members, Katlin Omair and Sinikka Pesonen, for their collaboration and input. We are also grateful to Tanja Dahlgren for assisting in the preparation of this manuscript.

The Impact of Gender Equality on the Management and Leadership: Reflections on change and resistance

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The Swedish societal context includes a relatively strong ideology for gender equality, GE, which influences management ideal and practice in organizations for both men and women. There is however still male dominance among managers, especially in private industry, and management is thus male gendered both symbolically and in practice. Women's presence as managers and the GE ideology challenge the masculine norm in management in Swedish organizations. Empirical findings are complex and ambiguous, exposing signs of change and resistance when the male norm is challenged. Male managers depict individual women as superior managers based on their personal experience, but as a category women are still described as deficient. Gender awareness is seen as crucial for women managers to challenge management constructions. They find scope for doing management differently in practice, e.g. working part-time and having small children.

Male managers sometimes reflect on the structural and cultural advantages they meet as men, thus questioning the ideology that justifies men's domination. Even though GE definitely is on the agenda for managers in a Swedish context, the importance of gender is at the same time being downplayed. GE is seen as exaggerated or as discriminating towards men. Construction of masculinities changes and expands to include new GE ideals; emotions, intuition, people orientation, being relaxed and taking parental leave. These changes are seen as 'natural' and are not related to or giving credit to GE work. An individualized view on GE contributes to a perspective where women are seen as responsible for not being discriminated against. So at the same time as GE challenges the male norm in management, part of the results show more relaxed men and further strained women.

Situated knowledge

My own point of departure is the early 1980's as a doctoral student in management, in Sweden. The field of knowledge starts off in gender inequality, not in gender equality. The time had come, during the 1970's, to describe and problematize gender inequality not only in society and work life, but also in the academy and in science overall. It was a thrilling time to enter the academic world, with so many challenging texts to take part from a variety of disciplines and with so much left to do in most of them. Women's studies/feminist studies opened up for exploring new paths, methods and thinking everywhere.

In organization studies the work had started. Joan Ackers' and Donald Van Houtens' often cited article from 1974 (Acker & Van Houten 1974), and Rosabeth Moss Kanter's classic book from 1977 (Kanter 1977) were important texts to initiate critique and new ways of thinking. The 'women in management' track represented a different, less critical perspective, but was also significant when inspiring researchers to take new steps in management studies including women as a category of interest. In Sweden, as in Norway, there was a number of interesting women's studies projects pointing at inequality in the labour market and in organizations (e.g. Baude et al. 1968; Holter 1982, 1984; Liljeström 1979). The issue of management was however almost taboo, as it was regarded as not being class aware. In addition, women's studies in the Nordic countries to a large extent, and with reason, started in contexts that were typical for women, but had been previously ignored. Management was a context where women were absent, and thus not of main concern from this perspective.

From individual 'Female leadership' to structural perspective

As a business school student I had experienced how women were invisible in business theories (in economics even more so) and in all kinds of teaching situations. Women's studies presented an option to critically study men's dominance and women's subordination in organizations from a feminist perspective. The feminist perspective included a focus on power relations in organizations and in management. Parallel to this, women in management were studied from an individual perspective in a number of US American articles and books creating a field of knowledge about 'female leadership' (e.g. Hennig & Jardim 1976). Most of these studies lacked a critical power

perspective, but made women in management visible and thus presented crucial observations and facts. Other studies exposed a gender neutral and mainstream stand that contributed to a view of women managers as lacking, insufficient and second best. Women were described being either different compared with 'normal' managers (men were not gendered), or as almost as good as 'normal' managers. The discourse of the insufficient woman is still active in public debate, e.g. when increasing the number of women in top management is discussed (Wahl 2001). Quotas are regarded as 'threats', and there is a fear of lack of competence in boardrooms if changes would take place (Tienari, Holgersson, Meriläinen & Höök 2009).

The individual perspective on women in management has been thoroughly criticized from many directions, but Rosabeth Moss Kanter's book 'Men and women of the corporation' was particularly important in moving the issue from the individual to the structural level in organizations as early as 1977. Instead of focusing on the insufficiencies in women the dynamics of majorities and minorities in management was analyzed. The structural effects of being a token woman were depicted as visibility, assimilation and contrast. Structures and cultures in organizations were highlighted as central when understanding why women were so few in management. At this time, this worked as an invitation to look at organizations from a structural perspective when studying women managers in Sweden. In combination with the central power perspective in feminist studies the structural approach included a social constructivist possibility, where gender and structures were regarded as social constructions accomplished in power processes in organizations.

Gender structures in organizations

The study that my thesis was based on was about the career development, in a broad sense, of women engineers and MBA's (Wahl 1992). The analysis gave voice to their interpretation of the relation between gender and organization. My aim was to construct a group of potential women in top management positions; those who could have been there. Based on previous research the study included a critical perspective of gendered power relations in organizations, and definitions of gender as socially and culturally constructed. The results offered structural explanations to the reproduction of few women in top positions, despite the fact that these women had the 'accurate' educational background. The concept gender structure was introduced as a tool to

describe organizations, regardless of gender distribution, from a gender perspective. Gender structure was defined as comprised by numbers, segregation and influence. Discrimination was interpreted as structural, accomplished by everyday actions and interactions in organizations. Women were not described as passive victims to structural discrimination, but as active actors through a number of coping strategies. The concept of coping strategies was inspired by previous research (Ethelberg 1985; Sheppard 1989) and developed further in relation to empirical findings in the thesis. The coping strategies, that were found, were named; gender neutral, positive, relative and contextual.

My thesis was one of the early contributions when building up an organization and gender field of knowledge in Sweden and the Nordic countries, with a specific focus on the gendering of management. Theories on gender structures and gender power relations in organizations explain the reproduction of men's dominance in management. With this new field of knowledge, the issues of dissemination of knowledge and possibilities to change structures were raised. In Sweden, there was soon a call for knowledge in both work life and in politics. The question was if gender theory and gender awareness could challenge gender structures? Would this field of knowledge affect the thinking in organizations, and would it make people act differently? Would gender theory influence gender equality initiatives?

Gendering of management

The 'normal' manager had no gender in gender blind research. The focus on women as minority in management was logical initially when criticizing gender blind research. During the 1990's focus shifted from the minority manager to the majority manager. The male norm in management was central to analyze gender distribution, the reproduction of male dominance and the management culture generally. The book, edited by David Collinson and Jeff Hearn, 'Men as managers and managers as men' (Collinson & Hearn 1996) included many vital contributions to the gendering of management body of knowledge. This book together with other articles and publications (Collinson & Hearn 1994) comprised a critical perspective on constructions of masculinities and innovative theorizing on management and leadership as male gendered. My own work developed in this direction (e.g. Wahl 1995; 1998), where men as managers were empirically studied and analyzed from a gender

aware position. The concept of homosociality became especially important when analyzing the empirical material. The concept had been used in different ways previously (Kanter 1977; Lipman-Blumen 1976) and was further developed in Swedish organization studies (Höök 2001; Holgersson 2001, 2003, 2006; Lindgren 1996, 1999) to promote the understanding of the practice of power relations in organizations. With focus on men in top management the performance of bonding were linked to the actions of discrimination to unravel power processes in the actual doings. Theories of homosociality give explanations to the reproduction of men's dominance in management and the exclusion of women. In addition, they offer clarification to resistance against GE actions related to management. The question is whether gender theories and awareness can challenge homosocial processes in management?

Gender equality impact

When getting closer to the issue of gender equality impact on management and leadership in Sweden there are several questions to take into account and themes to choose from. The relative importance of numbers and gender distribution in relation to other aspects is obvious. One crucial part is to highlight the development of methods when working for change. Are quotas as a method used? To what extent are constructions of management and leadership being challenged? Is there awareness about the gendering of management in organizational life? In what way do GE change agents challenge existing management cultures? Are power relations overlooked when stressing the significance of numbers?

Understanding power and change

Power is here seen as multidimensional. There are dominant cultures and subcultures in organizations. The dominant culture can constantly be challenged in different ways. GE initiatives can potentially challenge the dominant culture, but there are also possibilities of other subversive actions in organizations that could challenge gender inequality. The use of irony and other feminist strategies have been analyzed (e.g. Wahl, Holgersson & Höök 2005) when exploring organizational changes. The divide between men and women in change processes is complex, since there are feminist men and non-feminist women. Gender awareness is a multidimensional and complex phenomenon.

From an intersectional perspective there are other power relations to take into account when analyzing gender and change, class, ethnicity, sexuality, age etc. GE discourse is present in Swedish society and could be interpreted from a change and a resistance perspective simultaneously. GE mainstreaming can challenge gender order, but can also be used to decouple GE talk from actions. Change activates resistance, and taking GE results, e.g. parental leave, for granted can work as a resistance to future GE work (Wahl & Holgersson 2003).

The Swedish context

Gender equality has been on the political agenda for decades and have had a significant impact on Swedish work life. Apart from legislation and political decisions it has influenced everyday talk and practice in organizations. The rate of employment among Swedish women equals that of Swedish men for a long period of time (Statistics Sweden, 1992, 1997). In addition, the educational level of Swedish women is higher than that of Swedish men (Statistics Sweden, 2006). In politics women constitute 47 per cent of members of parliament, and 50 per cent of members of government. Childcare and parental leave are part of a 'normal' support system.

There is a strong sense of equal opportunity ideology even in management contexts. In a comparative study interviews with male senior executives from Denmark, Finland and Sweden are analyzed. The absence of women in top positions is identified as a sensitive topic and hard to explain due to the gender equality discourse. Sweden is put forward as a country where gender equality is a markedly stronger issue than in other Nordic countries. Both Finnish and Danish executives express that gender equality is much more pronounced in Sweden, and Swedish executives construct themselves as being aware of the importance of gender equality issues in the larger societal context (Tienari, Söderberg, Holgersson & Vaara 2005). The Nordic countries are united by a gender egalitarian image in societal discourses, as part of the Nordic welfare model (Bergqvist 1999; Borchorst et al. 2002). In comparison with other Nordic countries, however, Sweden is thus different when it comes to gender equality issues. Even with legislative measures, where organizations are supposed to increase the number of women on higher levels as part of equality actions, changes are slow on executive positions. Most Swedish managers and executives are men, especially within private business and industry (Statistics Sweden, 1992, 1997).

In 1993 and 2002 the Swedish government commissioned surveys to map the extent of men's dominance on management positions in Swedish business life (SOU 1994:3; SOU 2003:16). Both surveys show that men dominate management positions in organisations in the private sector. However, this dominance has decreased. In 1993, the proportion of men in top executive groups was 94 per cent, in 2002; the proportion of men was 84 per cent (Höök 1995; Regnö 2003). The surveys also show that organisations are engaged in efforts to bring about change. In 1993, 58 per cent of the organizations said they were involved in gender equality work. In 2003 this number has increased to 78 per cent, and gender equality work at organisations has grown in scope since that time. Most of the change efforts that are undertaken are however of the type prescribed in the legislation of gender equality (Wahl & Höök 2007).

In summary, there are signs of impact from gender and organization theories on politics and on societal discourse in general. Research from this field has impacted on GE work and management training. Gender theory has influenced and had an impact on Swedish media, where gender distribution in management is debated for a long time. There have also been several attacks on feminist research and gender theory in media from 2003 and on. This has resulted in, among many things, a separation between GE as valued positive and feminism as a negative disconnected phenomenon, sometimes exposed in media (Wahl et al. 2008). Feminism is then described as too extreme, whereas GE becomes normalized without history of activist background or theoretical base.

Change and resistance in empirical observations

In the empirical study that will be referred to in the following, the management culture and the way management is constructed and 'done' in practice will be of special interest. Numbers are important here, as women managers are present but not in top positions. The following analysis is based on 10 interviews with senior managers, six men and four women, in a research development company in the pharmaceutical industry in Sweden. The company is part of a large international group. Most of the interviewees have a university degree in natural sciences; some of them have a doctor's degree. The interviews analysed here are part of a larger study including interviews with managers (men and women) on three different hierarchical levels in two organizations, representing two different industries. In the pharmaceutical company, men dominate

management at all levels although gender distribution overall in the organization is fairly even. The company is typical for Swedish private business when it comes to the gender divide in management, the proportion of women in total and at management level is even slightly higher than average (cf. SOU 2003:16). Six interviewees are men; three are part of the senior executive management team, while the other three have positions directly below these. Four interviews are with women, where one is the sole woman, the HR manager, in senior executive management. The other three women hold management posts directly below senior executive management. The tool for the analysis, to grasp the complexity in the fluid process of situated practice of gender, is discourse and narrative analysis based on open interviews (Poggio 2006). For this article the interviewees perceptions on the following themes are chosen to highlight:

- 1) What constitutes ideal management and management in practice in the company?
- 2) Are there effects of men's dominance in the company on management?
- 3) Are there changes in management related to gender?

The managers were invited to relate to their own experience in thinking about and doing management in the organisation.

There are interesting contradictions exposed in the empirical observations. There is a prevalent male dominance among managers and management is still male gendered. Parallel to this the numbers of women in management is increasing and there is a GE discourse present in the answers and reflections.

Management ideal: seduced men and conscious women

Men and women describe management ideal from different positions. The male managers are 'seduced' by the ideal of either logical rationality or an unreachable masculinity. Women express a consciousness of management as gendered and a highly demanding ideal in terms of commitment and time. Men become visible and women invisible when the ideal is expressed and communicated. The men convey that the image of an ideal manager exists. The most common ideal is that of the logical, rational manager, both expert and leader. This ideal ties in with the company's management

culture – an ideal that in practice entails large variations. Even when looking closer on the accounts of the ideal, there are variations.

"Our policy is to recruit managers internally as far as possible. So, in discussions you can see some kind of dream exists that Tarzan will be found. Inevitable each time!"

Tarzan as a symbol for the ideal manager, mentioned in the narrative above, is hardly associated with logic rationality. This ideal rather stands for something desirable, but out of reach. Management courses and leadership programmes pass on the ideals, and in these a managerial similarity is created. Management culture is in the air we breathe, as one interviewee puts it. The attributes of a manager, described in the interviews, includes examples as having a spacious room or wearing a beard. Ideal management in the company is described by the women managers as male gendered. This means working a lot and always being visible to top management. This construction of management can however be challenged and gone beyond in practice, say the women managers. There is scope for working part-time and having small children in practice, even though this is not the ideal.

"If you said you had to fetch your kids from kindergarten they didn't comprehend. So after a while I caught on, stood up at meetings and said: sorry I have to leave for another meeting."

The female managers raise the gender issue spontaneously when talking about corporate management. They portray a clear management ideal within the company, which involves a heavy workload. Managers should furthermore set good examples, with high moral and ethical standards in combination with professional competence.

Effects of male dominance in management

There is a clear impact on management from a self-generating dominance of men, according to the female managers. A masculine management culture exists and GE has become part of it. Men's dominance is not seen as rooted in management itself. Nor do they voice explanations relating to gender differences or chance. On the other hand they describe language and communication as important aspects of the male management culture, creating disadvantages for women managers. Other aspects are

high workload and high visibility. The consequences for women managers are exclusion or expected adaptation.

The majority of the men interpret men's dominance in management by finding explanations in management itself, justifying why men are better suited for management than women are. Several of the justifications suggest that the answer to men's numerical dominance is elsewhere outside the company, such as that the recruitment base lacks women, since the natural sciences are male-dominated. Another common explanation is that international competition creates the conditions for how management should be: availability and long hours. Some men put forward the company culture as part of a wider business culture as the answer. The domestic and maternal responsibility of women is also a reason to the dominance of men in management, given by the interviewed men.

Unlike the male managers, female managers base their reasoning on the impact made on management by men's dominance, not the contrary: there are no explanations to women's minority position rooted in management itself. They describe a masculine culture where women are excluded or expected to adapt. It is clear how a manager should be, and consequently women have to perform more and play the power game as set out by men. GE has more become "going through the motions". It's "the in thing" but not internalised in thinking, one woman said. One woman in relation to men's dominance uses the term "self-generating". A culture exists that keeps women out. The different ways men and women communicate plays a part, says one woman. Women find it harder to be heard, harder to get their ideas through, is another way of describing the effect of men's dominance.

Management created by men means an extremely high workload, frequent travel and relinquishment of any personal needs, is a conclusion drawn. This type of management is prized, and being seen is more important than performing good results. If the performance of women managers could be measured they would be seen as better than many men. A lot of women, says one of the interviewees, "almost perform themselves to death".

"If you were appointing a manager, and went and looked at how the various departmental heads had performed through their personnel in the past year, then I think you'd get completely different candidates than those usually appointed to these posts. As it is now, you get the guy who has profiled himself in the past year."

Management practice challenging the ideal: relaxed men and struggling women

Management in practice means challenging the ideal for both men and women. Men expose a relaxed attitude towards management in practice. They describe it as context specific, and their own management style as 'being themselves'. Women expose a more struggling attitude when describing how to go beyond the male gendered management in practice.

The manager ideal lives alongside management as it appears in practice. The male interviewees emphasise that the most important aspect in relation to the ideal is to be yourself and to work on the basis of your own capabilities. Differences among the managers are frequently pointed out, exemplified by referring to either different organisational levels or different departments in the company. In particular the men in the management team point out that the manager ideal is empty talk not to be taken too seriously. The "finding Tarzan" dream, cited above, is presented as a pleasurable element in the recruitment process; nothing that anyone expects to be fulfilled. One man tells the story of how a good friend, by scrutinising his chief competitors for a management post, was helped to disregard the ideal. In relation to the competitors, that did not impress him, he was able to see himself as a natural candidate and apply for the position. The way in which management is done in practice is described as marked by difference. Managers adapt to their tasks and to their own personal capacities. The practice of management is linked more to the actual context, with specific requirements and circumstances. Several of the interviewees even describe themselves as the opposites of the manager ideal. One of them emphasizes his more egalitarian way in relation co-workers. Another describes himself as more people-oriented in his management. He uses emotions and intuition instead of logic and rationality. These accounts on emotions, intuition and egalitarianism can be influenced by GE discourse, as they contrast typical notions of masculinity.

The women managers feel that they themselves have challenged and struggled to go beyond the ideal management, for example working part-time as a manager. It is unusual, but not impossible, according to a woman manager. As a new manager, with small children, all her fellow managers were men around fifty. Taking care of children was alien to them. It has become easier when fathers also fetch their children at kindergarten, she says. On the basis of what they experience in the company, female interviewees say that women managers are more thorough when doing management.

They are more 'serious' about their management than their male colleagues. Male managers are more authoritarian, according to the women. Their thinking is more abstract, neglecting the practical and down-to-earth. Women are anxious to see that it really works in practice, and that the entire department is satisfied. Seeing women's management as being closer to actual operations often results in an interpretation, by the interviewees, that women have matters more in control. The women managers, however, see the different expectations on women and men managers as more interesting than talking about gender differences.

"Because I'm often plain and clear in what I say I'm frequently seen as very aggressive. Yet I'm very rarely angry. I'm a very cheerful person! But that's what I have to listen to. I imagine it's bound up in the role of women; you're supposed to sound vague and compliant. If I express myself clear, then I'm a threat."

A further dimension of the expectations on women managers, described in the interviews, is the pressure to "see everyone". One woman describes how she feels she has to chat cheerily with everyone, even when she lacks the time. The demands are greater on women managers, she says, having human feeling than what both men and women expect from male managers. When a man takes on a management job and steps into his new role, then the guys round about give him a clap. She also compares matters with her own partner: when he moves up the career ladder, he gets plenty of support from friends and relations. The deficiency of support she experiences makes her doubt if management is worth its price. It is satisfying enough to put up with a great deal, she concludes.

Contradictions

Male managers depict individual women as superior managers, based on experience. Women as a category can still be described as deficient however. The minority situation of women managers is compensated by positive constructions of women in management. The male managers portray women managers as different, and usually in a positive way. They are described as listeners, querying, clear-cut, organised, getting things done, good at leadership and organisation. They are not described as deficient in comparison with their male colleagues. The only criticism that was articulated against women managers was their desire to have everyone's support in decision-making,

which was questioned by several of the men. The positive image of women's management that develops, in the interviews, via examples taken from personal experience becomes contradictory in relation to the distribution of men and women managers in the company. If women managers are not only different, but often described as being better, why is the situation as it is? This becomes uncomfortable to talk about during the interviews at numerous times.

The GE discourse makes the inequality on management levels a sensitive topic. The male managers try to justify the low number of women in top management. They seek to downplay questions of gender but they are aware of the importance assigned to GE in society (cf. Tienari et al. 2005). One interviewee points out on several occasions that he doesn't think the issue of men and women is either of interest or importance. As a defence to this opinion he claims that he has seen 'all kinds of variations of men and women managers, both incredibly strong women managers and incredibly weak men'. Still, there's too much talk about gender, he states. The examples he chooses to give shows however what he regards as the normality, as opposed to all kinds of variations, to describe women as weak and men as strong in management. The GE discourse is present in the accounts when describing women managers as better and when trying to downplay the importance of gender. It can be interpreted as a way of resisting the impact of GE.

Male managers resisting GE

The male managers expose a view on management as immutable, defined by global, international competition. This justifies women's minority position in management. Management culture is not just about the company, or indeed the Group, but rather about business and corporate culture in general, several of the men suggest. Some of the men are sceptical to the GE discourse in society when stating that they doubt there being any genuine answer at all to the issue of men's dominance in management. They are critical to the amount of talk about gender equality in the company. With this 'continuous and massive' focus on gender-related issues in the company, as one man expressed it, it is surprising the number of senior women managers is not greater. Here, the lack of impact of GE is interpreted as a sign of deficiency in women.

Male managers pro-gender equality

All men do not share a sceptical attitude to GE. One of them suggests the opposite view when it comes to combination of management and parenthood. It is considered just as natural for fathers as mothers to stay at home, he explains. His own children are small and he can't see it as a problem. He was at home with an infant for eight months and it was totally accepted. For him it's about a generational change among managers, not necessarily a GE issue.

Several of the male managers feel it is easier for them to assert themselves in the company culture because they know how to express themselves in the right way. Ideas can be presented in a way that could be described as "masculine". It is easier to get the word in discussions and easier to "get what you want". Women who reach top level are forced to play an exaggerated game – that can be seen negatively. Men can be more relaxed, while women appear slightly stressed. The idea that being a man might be an advantage, a typical mark from a GE discourse, turns up in several of the interviews. One man hopes that men's domination has not left its impact on management to the advantage of men. He would consider it unfortunate if he himself had 'jumped the queue' because of gender. Acknowledging that being a man might be an advantage, not least in homosocial terms, in everyday situations as part of the culture, can be interpreted as an impact of GE work.

Numbers change but the male norm in management persists

The male managers display no great enthusiasm for changing management. When they discuss feasible or unfeasible changes, discrimination against women or the advantages of being a man are not subjects raised. Some of them have thought about how management could be changed, but the majority see it as immutable. The management format comes from elsewhere and is contingent on the requirements facing managers, according to them. There are targets to achieve and you have to be constantly available. Also mentioned by the male managers is the competition facing management activities from demands set by home and children, though mostly in relation to women's situation. However, some of the men are partly positive to changes in management. One man has small children and sees this in particular as part of the reason why he is able to influence the management setup. Another man says that the heavier home

workload for women colleagues doesn't make them worse at their job, but instead more efficient. Though the personal examples they give show a variation in how individuals have worked in different periods of life, with childcare again being involved. Paternal leave and the greater flexibility provided by new technology are named as factors that could increase GE in working life, even if not changing senior management.

For female interviewees, the issue of how the company can support and make the situation easier for women managers is important. The company's women managers meet in a network. Many of them wonder why take on more work and responsibility? They feel the maximum has been reached. This restrains women from taking on more substantial tasks. The image of the manager, who is always accessible, always has time, influences their own management. Female interviewees still relate how they themselves cope with the time issue. If you don't think that management is the most important aspect of life, then you have to challenge the way management is constructed, one woman reflects. She experiences a continuous battle to have management shaped in a different way, and feels that most people don't even try to change it.

Impact of GE and the presence of women in management

An interesting feature in this study is that the male managers depict women as better managers than men. This finding stands in contrast to the perception of women managers as insufficient, as often expressed in the traditional management discourse. The female managers in the study also express the image of women as better, more serious managers. It is in specific and actual experiences that women managers are described in positive terms. Women as category can still be portrayed as deficient and lacking the right management qualities, by male managers. Thus there is a clash between the discourse on women managers as deficient and individual experiences on women as capable. At the same time it is as if the minority position of women in structure is compensated by positive constructions of femininities in management. The positive accounts of women, based on experience and a GE discourse, do not necessarily affect the number of women in management. The GE discourse makes talking of women as deficient uncomfortable. Women managers are talked of as skilled and able, the minority becomes exceptional, but can still not blend in as gender neutral. One plausible interpretation could be that in management practice women do not contribute to homosocial power relations. As individual women managers they are

regarded as competent, respected and even superior. However, on an organizational level they do not participate in power relations as the male managers do, and are not able to contribute to the masculine management culture in the same way as the male managers.

The male managers do not spontaneously raise the issue of gender in relation to how management is done in the company. The constructions of management that are presented are all indirectly portrayed as men via examples and stories. Identification with the managerial role is easy since the male managers are aware that the ideal is unrealistic and since they themselves are given the scope to be different in practice. The ideal appears to unite, it provides something to relate to and thus generates similarity. Management in practice gives scope for difference for male managers. It is described as context specific and that 'being yourself' is most important. The answers develop into circular reasoning round logical and emotional, where the more emotionality is presented as desirable in management, the more it becomes male gendered. This finding can be compared with another Swedish study where social competence, as part of a modern work ideal, had been learnt by male employees and had become a part of the local definition of masculinity, despite it being traditionally linked to femininity. The privileged position of masculinity and the hierarchical order between women and men were possible to maintain since women's social competence was founded on natural traits, while men's was acknowledged as acquired and therefore more important. When a trait becomes prestigious its meaning changes and becomes masculine (Abrahamsson 2003).

Gender awareness is crucial for the women to challenge management constructions. They have a structural perspective on the expectations that women managers meet. Gender awareness becomes contradictory for the male managers. There is a clash between a management discourse, seeing women as deficient, and management as immutable, and a GE discourse perceiving women as more competent and management as changeable. The GE discourse is present in the accounts when describing women managers as better and when trying to downplay the importance of gender. It can be interpreted as a way of resisting the impact of GE. Gender awareness in male managers can however open up for reflections on the structural advantages that they experience as men. Thus both women and men act as change agents from a gender aware position. Several of the female interviewees express frustration in relation to the situation for women managers and the opportunities for change. What they would like

to see is a clearer message from the company that the presence of more women managers is important and that women managers are of value. They have however developed their own strategies for dealing with management and time, fighting to change the management format to suit them.

Reflections on change and resistance

The presence of women managers and a GE discourse influence changes in constructions of management. The masculine norm in management is confronted in two ways.

1. Constructions of masculinity change. Masculinity expands to include new equality ideals and consequently adds on possibilities. Characteristics that used to be perceived as “feminine” transform into “masculine”. Women are compensated as being “exceptional” on an individual level. Consequences in organizational changes are unclear. A status quo in gender distribution on management levels or increased equality in the long run?
2. Constructions of management change. Women challenge the norm by criticizing and doing management differently. Men question the ideology that justifies men’s domination in management. The masculine norm in management is challenged which could open up for changes of the structural and cultural inequality on management positions.

Resistance against GE could be summarized as notions of GE as exaggerated or discriminating towards men. A more individualized GE discourse has resulted in seeing GE results as ‘natural’ and thus not verified as GE results, which creates resistance against future GE work. It has become women’s responsibility not to be discriminated against in management. One interpretation is that men profit more from GE as it has opened up for difference in constructions of masculinities, being ‘yourself’, emotional, intuitive and to take parental leave. Women still have to struggle with changes in management, and from a gender aware perspective addressing these issues from a structural point of view. Has GE work reinforced gender order in organizations creating relaxed men and stressed out women in management? Is there a shift going back to an individual analysis on gender and organizations in practice, that will influence Swedish GE work? At this point I still see a strong resistance among women when consultants

advice Swedish women in management to 'raise their salaries, improve their networking, balance their life and get more healthy', instead of challenging masculine norm in management and management culture. The structural and power perspective in gender studies is crucial in GE work, as there are signs of GE discourse becoming more individualized.

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Ten Things You Should Know About Gender, Leadership, and Organizational Culture: Reflections on Twenty Years of Research

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Introduction

When I was asked to give a keynote address on gender, leadership, and organizational research, as I thought about the issue I was pleased to note that there was simply too much to say in such a short space of time. To make the situation more manageable I decided to restrict my focus to ten insights that form a useful framework for understanding the impact of culture on gender and leadership. The insights are drawn from several studies of the gendering of organizational culture over time (Mills 1988, 1995, 1997, 2002, 2006; Mills & Helms Mills 2006).

1. Organizational Culture is not separable from the identity work of the researcher

From a postpositivist approach (Prasad 2005) an important starting point for any research project is to reflect on the role of the researcher in the process. This is particularly the case with feminist research and the problem of identity politics (Stanley & Wise 1990). This raises many issues but for our purposes there are two points to be made. First, there is a performative element that arises out of the role of embodiment and social relations, namely that the researcher's embodiment influences and is mediated by the social context in which they are acting. To that end, I want to dramatically underline the point through the statement that 'my name is Albert and I am a sexist.' Drawing on the simile of the address by members of Alcoholics Anonymous, and the notion that the issue (of sexism) needs to be consciously addressed, this statement reminds the audience of the gendered nature of authorship – theirs and the author's. Second, there is the issue of theorization and the reminder that we are drawn to ideas, concepts and theories that are part of the discursive landscape

(Foucault 1979). Thus, to emphasize my first point, my focus on organizational culture (and its relationship to gender) is in large part due to (a) the prominence of the term – in research (e.g., Schein 1985) and practice (Helms Mills 2003) – especially when I began to utilize the term in the 1980s (Mills 1988) at the height of its popularity (Kieser 1997); (b) that it opened space for qualitative and postpositivist research, and (c) that it had potential links to feminist research on the role of culture and gender.

2. Organizational Culture Doesn't Exist – that's what makes it so powerful!

Before the heuristic value of an organizational culture focus carries us away it is as well to remind ourselves that it is, just that, a heuristic. Mary Douglas (1982: 183) sums it up well when talking of culture per se, but her description is equally -- perhaps more -- applicable to organizational culture:

“Culture is a blank space, a highly respected, empty pigeonhole. Economists call it “tastes” and leave it severely alone. Most philosophers ignore it – to their own loss. Marxists treat it obliquely as ideology or superstructure. Psychologists avoid it, by concentrating on child subjects. Historians bend it any way they like. Most believe it matters, especially travel agents.”

In the field of management and organizational studies the term has more often than not been reified (Davies 1984), turned into a measurable variable (Ashkanasy, Wilderom, & Peterson 2000) and spun by academics (Peters & Waterman 1982) and consultants alike as a problem to be fixed (Helms Mills 2003). In terms of gender and leadership the study of organizational culture can be summed up as the good, the bad and the ugly.

The Good: For a number of postpositivist and qualitative researchers the widespread popularity of ‘organizational culture’ drew attention to the non-rational, inter-relational, and holistic aspects of organizations (Weick 1985). It has also been welcomed by feminist researchers as opening a space of gender research (Gherardi 1995); drawing on feminist notions of gender as “culturally specific patterns of behaviour that come to be associated with the sexes” (Oakley 1972).

The Bad: Most of the debate around organizational culture ignored gender. On the one hand, this was not terribly surprising given that much of the field of management and organizational analysis has been characterized as gendered (Burrell 1984; Hearn & Parkin 1983; Mills & Tancred 1992b; Wilson 2003). On the other hand, it might have been expected that a focus on culture in organizations would lead to greater analysis of the impact of organizational culture on people and identity. Instead, if anything, analyses of the outcomes of organizational culture took on newer gendered explanations as researchers characterized cultures as “strong” (good) and “weak” (bad) (Deal & Kennedy 1982), organizational behaviours as ‘Ambushes, Shoot-outs, and Knights of the Roundtable’ (Hirsch & Andrews 1983), and cultural outcomes (including, one supposes, such things as discriminatory hiring practices) as the outcome of ‘shared values and beliefs’ (Schein 1985).

The ugly: At its worst organizational culture has been used as a tool (sic) for improved performance, manipulation of cultural values, and ultimately the way we come to view people and organizations – with men and women reduced to cogs in the wheels of organizational culture (Davies 1984; Marshall 1992, 1993; Martin 2002; Peters & Waterman 1982). In many ways organizational culture manipulation has become the ultimate leadership tool for the manager of the late 20th and early 21st centuries (Abrahamson 1996; Jackson 2001; Schein 1987, 1990).

The lessons for feminist research is that organizational culture is a useful heuristic for understanding and addressing discriminatory processes at work but should not be viewed as something that exists independent of human action.

3. Organizational Culture is socially constructed – let’s use a gendered lens

Despite the problematic use of organizational culture it has attracted interest from a number of feminist researchers. For feminists culture has always been of interest (Chodorow 1971; Hooks 1994; Oakley 1972; Rosaldo 1974; Ryan 1979). And over the past four decades or so there has been legal recognition in North America of the role of culture and workplace discrimination (see, for example, Griggs vs. Duke Power (US 1971) and the Abella Commission in Canada (Abella 1984)). There have also been a growing number of feminist studies that have utilized organizational culture as a

heuristic for addressing discrimination at work (Aaltio-Marjosola 1994; Czarniawska & Calás 1997; Gherardi 1995; Hearn 2002; Helms Mills 2005; Korvajarvi 1998; Maddock 1999; Miller 2002; O'Connor 1997; Shepherd & Pringle 2004; Wilson 1997).

4. Organizational Culture has to be negotiated

If we accept that organizational culture is a socially constructed idea it follows that, like all socially constructed notions, the idea is contested and the outcome is likely a 'negotiated order' (Strauss, Schatzman, Ehrlich, Bucher & Sabshin 1963). The term in use (i.e., how people talk about the culture of an organization as if it exists) can be seen as part of a process of ongoing sensemaking, which is simultaneously enacted and reviewed through a series of retrospective sensemaking (Weick 1995). In other words, how people come to think about organizational culture is influenced by processes of enactment whereby business scholars, consultants, popular book authors, and senior managers define organizational culture for particular audiences (Carr, Hard & Trahan 1996; Helms Mills 2003; Helms Mills, Dye & Mills 2008; Kieser 1997). In many cases this takes the form of senior managers introducing 'culture change programs' into their business; defining, training, and measuring 'culture' in the process. Rarely, if ever, do these processes consider gender as part of the culture. If anything they end up redefining gendered relations and in ways that further rather than redress discrimination (Cole & Povall 1991; Helms Mills 2002; Helms Mills et al. 2008; Mills 1996; Mills & Wilson 2001). Nonetheless, in practice, definitions of organizational culture are negotiated as managers search for consultants to introduce a change program, managers discuss their specific aims and communicate them to employees, and employees make sense of what they are being told (Helms Mills 2003; Helms Mills et al. 2008).

Here the lesson for feminists is to intervene to address discriminatory practices by, among other things, negotiating the meaning of culture and its impact on people.

5. Organizational Culture is discontinuously continuous

As the debate around organizational culture has made clear there are as many definitions as there are researchers (Allaire & Firsirotu 1984; Smircich 1983). My own

approach is to frame organizational culture “as being primarily composed of a configuration of ‘rules,’ enactment and resistance, within which gendered relationships are embedded and manifest.” Thus, “the gendered character of a specific organizational culture can be understood through analysis of the particular rule[s] . . . that compose a certain configuration” (Mills 1988: 69). Using this approach much of my research into the gendering of organizational culture over time has focused on how certain sets of organizational interrelationships -- mediated by rules, enactment, and resistance -- constitute, maintain and change discriminatory practices over time. This focus has been explored through three longitudinal studies of airline ‘cultures’ – British Airways, Air Canada, and Pan American Airways (Mills 2006). The findings suggest that what comes to be thought of as the culture of an organization is continuous as a concept (for understanding organizational events and behaviours) but differs widely in the way that concept is understood and responded to.

At this Juncture – becoming the time traveler’s husband: in studying the ‘culture’ of British Airways over time it became evident that understandings of the corporate identity and the identities of the men and women who constituted the airline changed dramatically over time, even though members of the organization continued to refer back to the organization’s culture as a continuous process. For example, while British Airways was formed in 1974 from a merger of British European Airways (BEA) and the British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) the corporate materials and histories of the organization continued to trace “the airline” back to 1919, and the previous fifty seven airlines that were merged or taken over in the process (Mills 2006). To deal with the potentially discontinuous nature of cultural understandings I developed a method – called “a juncture” -- for understanding change (Mills 1994, 2002): “The concept of the juncture is a methodological device for studying organizational change over time. It refers to a concurrence of events in time in which a series of images, impressions, and experiences come together, giving the appearance of a coherent whole that influences how an organization is understood” (Mills 2010: 509). The concept of juncture is allied to Foucault’s (1979; May 2006) notion of episteme, Febvre and Bloch’s notion of mentalities (Burguière 2009), and Weick’s (2001) notion of ongoing and retrospective sensemaking: “In brief, while a particular set of factors may come together to create particular ways of viewing the world a change in those factors can lead to a change in the subjectivity of those involved - creating different ways of viewing the world over time. To understand a particular period (or “junction”) we need to understand not only the main features involved but the particular subjectivity of the time” (Mills 2002: 12).

Applying the notion of juncture requires a focus on selected events. In the study of British Airways the focus was the hiring and imaging of women, which eventually generated eight junctures:

Junctures and British Airways:

- 1. The development of an all-male organization (1919–1924)
- 2. The introduction and growth of female employment (1924–1939)
- 3. The war years and the rapid expansion of female employment (1940–1954)
- 4. The consolidation and normalization of female employment (1946–1960)
- 5. The eroticization of female labour (1960–1974)
- 6. Equity struggles (1974–1981)
- 7. The development and consolidation of professionalized female labour (1982–1991)
- 8. The emergence of a new juncture focused on female management and leadership (1991–).

Analysis of the various junctures indicated the continuous but also the discontinuous nature of 'organizational culture.'

Here the lesson is that change should not be viewed as progressive (i.e., the unfolding of an underlying rationale or purpose --Lyotard 1984) but rather a constant engagement with ideas and practices. Leadership around a notion of an ideal-typical (non-discriminatory) organizational culture needs to take into account changing understandings of what that means and entails to those involved.

6. Organizational culture is not that unique – it is composed of a number of copies

As a social construct organizational culture can be understood as crafted out of aspects of a discursive field (Foucault 1972) that influences what is and what isn't discussed; what is and what isn't important; what purpose certain concepts play or do not play. The concept of organizational culture, although around for some time before (see, for

example, Eldridge & Crombie 1974), took off in management practice and education at the start of the 1980s in the face of a perceived threat of Japanese competitiveness in North American and European markets (Helms Mills et al. 2008; Ouchi 1981; Pascale & Athos 1981). It very quickly became a panacea for a number of perceived organizational problems (Abrahamson 1996; Helms Mills 2003; Jackson 2001; Kieser 1997) and in the process took on various shared contours. In the process the instrumental character of organizational culture was privileged over more humanistic concerns. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent in attempts to change the cultures of organizations and often without regard to the human factor (i.e., what cultural change can mean for people's sense of self, etc). On the other hand, cost is often evoked as a reason for failure to tackle anti-discriminatory policies. Thus, organizational change programs often include similar instrumental aspects and marginalize human concerns. For example, when Helms Mills (2003) was studying culture change in a major Canadian utility company she noted the company's focus on four key values – a commitment to value employees, the environment, customers, and the province (i.e., the voters who are affected by the Crown-owned company's pricing policies). On her travels around the province (of Nova Scotia) to visit company offices she was surprised to find the exact same four values posted in the window of the provincially owned liquor store. She later found out that both publically owned companies had hired the same consultant. She was also later to find out that the way the particular cultural values had been conceived left little space for review of discriminatory practices (Helms Mills 2004).

The lesson here is that understandings of organizational culture are imposed and open to challenge. The struggle needs to be not only over cultural values, practices, and artifacts but also around the understandings of those values, practices, and artifacts (Gramsci 1978).

7. Organizational culture change can be shocking

Weick (1995) suggests that an “on-going sense” of a situation can change if and when there is a shock to the system – a sudden breakdown; a crisis; a series of unusual events; an accident. Arguably the process of enacting organizational culture (e.g., introducing the idea and practice of organizational culture into an organization) helps to create and stabilize a dominant view of organizational reality. Changes in the idea of an

organization's culture or the practices that support it can lead to what Weick (1995) calls a 'shock' to the on-going sense of those involved. In 1924 British Airways' predecessor airline moved from a male-only organization to one where ten percent of employees were women (employed almost exclusively in clerical work) following government intervention that facilitated merger, funding, and a series of governmental rules. The gender composition of the airline dramatically changed again with the onset of World War II, but also again in the 1970s when the company experienced a series of internal struggles over employment equity against a context of a growing women's liberation movement (Mills 2006). Changes to the idea of the organization's culture can also shock members into a rethink of the organization and its practices, whether intended or not. That senior managers know the dangers and possibilities of such changes is clear in a vast literature that encourages them to manage impressions, establish mission statements, and enact organizational visions (Bass 1990; De Hoogh, Den Hartog & Koopman 2005). Feminists have much to learn from these strategies -- grasping the leadership of sensemaking situations by either challenging existing on-going sensemaking or defining the sensemaking environment where taking spaces are opened by changing impressions.

8. Sorry Ed . . . Organizational culture is not all about shared values and beliefs

One of the most influential definitions of organizational culture is that of Schein (1985: 9) who view it as "as a pattern of basic assumptions" that help to formulate organizational values, which become 'shared assumptions.' This perspective has lent itself to an "integrationist" approach to organizational culture (Martin 2002), which simultaneously defines and seeks to achieve the unified character of the phenomenon. For feminists this is problematic because it can serve to concretize or 'normalize' existing organizational realities that privilege men and masculinity to the detriment of women and femininity (Collinson & Hearn 1996). It can suggest that values linked to discriminatory practices are shared by everyone including those who are discriminated against. While critical approaches also pay special attention to the unifying effects of culture in the form of hegemony (Connell 1987; Gramsci 1978) and discursive fields (Foucault 1979) they also point to the contested elements of shared experiences and the potential for change. These can be characterized as "differentiated" and "fragmentary" approaches to organization culture (Martin 2002) and point to the need for feminist

strategies that surface the contested nature of organizational culture and attempts to represent its as a “shared” phenomenon.

9. Organizational culture is legitimate – not!

Arguably the acceptance of organizational culture relies on what Weick (1995) calls plausibility -- a socio-psychological process whereby people come to accept, or accept as ‘normal,’ ongoing practices. As such the plausibility of an ongoing sense of reality relies on a series of interrelated socio-psychological processes that include various cues, retrospective sensemaking (drawing on experience), social sensemaking (relying on social networks), identity work (depending on individuals’ maintenance of a particular sense of self), and enactment (those actions that solidify a particular sense of a situation) (Weick 1995; 2001). This suggests that ongoing sensemaking is simultaneously maintained through its links with the processes of enactment (e.g., senior management pronouncements) and plausibility (e.g., the use of cues that appeal to shared experiences) and is unstable due to its reliance on a multitude of sensemaking moments that reinforce, misunderstand and question the dominant reality (Helms Mills 2003).

For feminists this means that gendered notions of organizational culture are susceptible to implausibility through shocks (see point #7 above) and other challenges (Mills & Helms Mills 2004).

10. Organizational culture embeds/contextualizes its own leadership possibilities

Finally, what we can learn from organizational culture is that it can be seen as a discourse that contributes to a discursive field. As such it creates its own leadership possibilities; making certain ways of thinking more or less plausible (Foucault 1973); establishing imaginative and institutional framework within which actors are taken (Unger 1987). This suggests a number of feminist leadership strategies, including engagement with the dominant discourse through the development of alternative feminist discourse (Dye & Mills 2010; Ferguson 1984); encouraging a focus on techniques of the self and resistance as a form of discursive leadership (Brewis 2004);

and feminist leaders as “agents of plausibility” who create challenges to/adoption of strategies of plausibility (Carroll, Mills & Helms Mills 2008; Mills & Helms Mills 2004).

Ten things you should at least think about!!

- 1. Organizational Culture is not separable from the identity work of the researcher
- 2. Organizational Culture Doesn't Exist – that's what makes it so powerful!
- 3 Organizational Culture is socially constructed – let's use a gendered lens
- 4 Organizational Culture has to be negotiated
- 5. Organizational Culture is discontinuously continuous
- 6. Organizational culture is not that unique – it is composed of a number of copies
- 7. Organizational culture change can be shocking
- 8. Sorry Ed . . . Organizational culture is not all about shared values and beliefs
- 9. Organizational culture is legitimate – not!
- 10. Organizational culture embeds/contextualizes its own leadership possibilities

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Women on Top Corporate Boards: The slow progress and initiatives that provide change

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Introduction

This paper is based on a presentation given at the NASTA conference on “Leadership through the Gender Lens” in Helsinki, October 2009. The paper looks at the progress of women onto the corporate boards of the top companies, with a particular focus on the UK where the largest organizations listed on the Financial Times Stock Exchange (FTSE) are considered. We start by considering the profile of these organizations in terms of their gender composition. Then we go on to look at some of the myths around women’s presence or absence on corporate boards. We ask (and hope to answer) the question ‘Why does it matter?’, and finally consider some of the initiatives both in the UK and other countries that are endeavouring to increase the gender balance on boards. The paper ends with some recommendations, particularly pertinent to improving women’s representation on large corporate boards within the UK context.

Profile of UK company boards

Since 1999 the International Centre for Women Leaders at Cranfield School of Management, in the UK, has monitored the progression of women to the top of the UK’s corporate boards in its annual Female FTSE Report. In recent years the report has expanded to include not just the FTSE 100 companies but up to 1700+ companies listed on the FTSE stock exchange. It now covers not only the corporate board, but also the Executive Committee – i.e. one level below the board - to reveal the number of women in the pipeline. In the 2008 report (Sealy, Vinnicombe & Singh), we described what has been “a decade of delay” in terms of opening the boardrooms of Britain’s top companies to women in any significant numbers. Since the first report in 1999, the percentage of women on boards had risen by just five percentage points from a little under 7% to just

11.7%. This glacial progress continued as the 2009 figures report a total of 12.2% of women holding board directorships, including only 5.2% of executive directorships (the UK has a unitary board system with executive and non-executive roles). See Figure 1.

| Female FTSE Index 1999-2009 | 2009 | 1999 |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Female held directorships | 131 (12.2%) | 79 (6.9%) |
| Female Executive Directorships | 17 (5.2%) | 13 (2.0%) |
| Female Non-Executive Directorships | 114 (15.2%) | 66 (10.8%) |
| Women holding directorships | 113 | 66 |

From 2009 Female FTSE Report (Sealy, Vinnicombe & Doldor, 2009)

As can be seen, the area that women seem to be making slightly better progress in is that of the Non-Executive Directorship. In order to understand why this may be so, it is important to understand the context of changes within the boardroom structures that have occurred in the UK. In 2003 two major reports on corporate governance called for a better balance of executive and non-executive directors on UK corporations, as well as greater diversity of board members (Higgs 2003; Tyson 2003). Figure 2 shows how the board composition has shifted dramatically, with a far greater proportion of non-executive than executive directors today. In fact, in 2009, 61% of the FTSE 100 companies had only three or less executive directors on their boards.

| Changes in FTSE 100 Board Composition | 2009 | 1999 |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Total FTSE 100 directorships | 1078 | 1255 |
| No. of FTSE 100 NEDs | 748 | 610 |
| No. of FTSE 100 Executive Directorships | 330 | 645 |

Twenty-five, or one quarter of FTSE 100 companies have all-male boards in 2009. Disappointingly, this figure actually rose for the first time in a number of years, from 22 in 2008. Another area of disappointment in 2009 is the number of companies who now have multiple women on their boards. This figure peaked in 2008 at 39 of the 100 (Sealy et al 2008), but in 2009 had declined to 37. This is significant as recent research has shown that with just one female on the board, the effects of tokenism are often in play, whereas once multiple women are present both their presence and their contribution becomes normalised.

“Our results show that while individual women directors’ expertise and skills play a role in how much leadership they exert on boards, they are more likely to be effective leaders on boards that have reached a critical mass or tipping point of three women” (Erkut, Kramer & Konrad, 2008, p. 231).

Encouragingly, however, there has been a slight increase in the number of women holding top key positions in FTSE 100 companies. In 2008 an investment trust company, new to the FTSE 100 became the first to have both key positions of CEO and Chair occupied by a woman. In 2009, a large retail firm joined the FTSE 100 with both the CEO and CFO roles held by women. Within the top 100 companies, 4% of CEOs are

female and 3% of Chairs are female and the proportion of female CFOs has increased to 5%.

The pipeline

A question often asked regarding women's career progression is whether it is harder for women to succeed to larger organizations than smaller ones. And so we have also monitored the percentages of women on other listed companies. The FTSE 250 (companies number 101-350 in terms of market capitalization) has consistently been considerably lower at around 7% female representation on the board (see Figure 3). The other listings make up a total of a further 1,700+ companies, whose average female board representation ranges fairly consistently from 5-7%. However, interestingly, one area where there does finally appear to be some improvement is at one level below the board, at Executive Committee level. Across the FTSE 250 and other smaller listings the percentage ranges from 13-15% and in 2009 in the FTSE100 companies, this figure rose to 18%. This is significant as it means that not only are slightly fewer women experiencing always being the only woman in a meeting, but it may also begin to signal to the women below them there is a possibility for their own career success (Sealy, forthcoming).

| INDEX | % Female Board | % Senior Managers | No. of Female Board Directors | No. of Female Senior Managers |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| FTSE 100 | 12.2% | 18% | 131 | 175 |
| FTSE 250 | 7.3% | 13.3% | 145 | 269 |
| FTSE smaller listings* | 6.0% | 13.4% | 526 | 1,167 |

*Includes FTSE AIM, SmallCap, Techmark 100, Techmark All-share, Fledgling

As well as looking at how many women are in the pipeline, the Female FTSE Report also monitors their progress onto boards, in terms of the new board appointees. In the past few years since we have monitored this, there have been on average approximately 150 new FTSE 100 board appointments made each year. In 2009 there were 156, of which 23, just 14.7%, were women. Whilst this is an improvement the previous year's disappointing figure of 10.7%, it is clear that at this rate it will take decades to reach any sort of balance or parity in the boardroom. In June 2009, in a move unprecedented in the UK (although not uncommon in other countries), the UK government introduced targets for the 'flow' of new public appointments, in line with the population percentages, of 50% female, 14% disabled and 11% black and ethnic minority. However, unlike in other European and Nordic countries, there is no sense that such a quota is appropriate for the private sector.

Of the 23 new female appointed directors, 14 had not previously held a FTSE 100 directorship, which demonstrates a very small increase to the talent pool of female directors. On closer inspection of these 14, it is noticeable and remarkable that only one of them is British, suggesting that (foreign) nationality may be an important element of human capital for female board directors.

The Myths of Women and Boards

Myth 1 – Women are not interested in board positions

In the UK the idea that women are simply not interested in board positions is one of the common myths given as explanation for the low representation of women on boards. This is perpetuated by business press coverage stating that women are 'choosing' to leave high-flying careers, often suggesting a personal decision has been made by the women to devote more time to family or other commitments. The issue of how much real choice women have is currently topical in gender literature and is debated in a forthcoming special issue of the *Gender in Management: An International Journal* (2010). However, in a study of female members of executive committees of FTSE 350 companies, 80% reported that they would like to have an NED position on a FTSE 100 corporate board (Sealy et al. 2008). In a recent report for the UK government, Sealy, Doldor & Vinnicombe (2009a) found that in the women on boards literature there were three major types of explanations given to account for the lack of gender diversity on

boards. The first of these concerned **Individual Characteristics** and included the assumptions that:

- Women do not aspire to board directorships; and
- Women lack the necessary skills to sit on boards.

The authors found no robust evidence to support either of these two assumptions, and provided evidence to the contrary. There is a wealth of research in the fields of management and psychology that suggests that persistent gender stereotypes create biased judgments about the competence of women aspiring to get onto boards (for example, see Eagly & Carli 2003).

Myth 2 – Women do not have the right leadership style

Debates around what is the ‘the right leadership style’ are many and varied. However, the evidence shows that in the UK once women are appointed onto a FTSE 100 board, they are marginally more likely than men to hold multiple directorships (12.3% as opposed to 11.6%) on other FTSE 100 boards. Thus once they are given the opportunity, these women are clearly accepted as successful in their leadership capabilities.

Myth 3 – Women do not have the right experience

In 1999 a report by Catalyst showed that male Fortune 500 CEOs believed there was a dearth of women on boards because they lack general management experience and have not been long enough in the pipeline. Similar results were found in the UK in 2000 (Catalyst & Opportunity Now 2000). The same research asked female directors why there were so few of them on the boards and they replied that it was due to male stereotyping! The recent review of research on the lack of gender diversity mentioned above also found a lack of evidence suggesting women were under-qualified, and other research has found that both in the UK and elsewhere women on boards are often more qualified than their male counterparts (Hoel 2009; Singh, Terjesen & Vinnicombe 2008).

An investigation into the newly appointed directors of the FTSE 100 companies between 2001-2004 showed some interesting differences between the 72 female directors and a matched sample of 72 male directors (see figure 4).

| Work experience of new FTSE directors | Male (n=72) | Female (n=72) |
|--|--------------------|----------------------|
| Financial institutions | 31.9% | 44.4% |
| Management consultancy | 13.9% | 27.8% |
| Accountant | 20.8% | 19.4% |
| Law | 6.9% | 15.3% |
| Political | 4.2% | 11.1% |
| Academia | 5.6% | 12.5% |
| Public sector | 18.1% | 31.9% |
| Voluntary/Charity sector | 13.9% | 22.2% |
| Other/Government | 13.9% | 23.6% |

The female directors have often had more multiple sector experience than the male directors. Also interesting is what Singh et al (2008) found about previous directorship experience. One of the common requirements search consultancies say that Nomination Committees give them when employing them to find a new appointee is 'previous PLC board experience'. Given the current percentages, this obviously limits an already small pool of possible female candidates. Figure 5 shows the percentages of men and women with previous experience on FTSE 100, FTSE 250 and smaller boards. Whilst only 22% of women have previous FTSE 100 experience, we can also see that in actual fact only 42% of men do. Given the larger percentage of male new appointees, this means that quite a significant number of men without FTSE 100 board experience **are** being appointed to these directorships. Thus, despite prior experience being cited as a requirement **and** given as a reason why women might not be attaining such positions, 363 men compared with just 56 women who **had not had the required**

experience did, nevertheless, attain a FTSE 100 directorship between 2001-2004. This finding completely negates the validity of women's lack of experience as a justifiable reason for their absence on such boards.

Myth 4 – Women do not take risks

Prior to the recent financial crisis and subsequent severe economic downturn, the belief that women do not take risks was considered to be detrimental to their career prospects. More recently, however, the notion of risk-taking has been viewed more negatively and there has been much debate in the public press as to whether if there had been more women in charge of businesses and women are more risk averse, then perhaps such major risks within the financial sector may not have been taken, with their ensuing catastrophic consequences. However, at Cranfield we would suggest that women are not risk averse, but are more risk aware – i.e. they do not necessarily shy away from risk, but will take it on only after due care and consideration of alternatives and possible outcomes.

With regards to board positions, research has shown that women are actually more likely to be appointed onto corporate boards when companies' share prices have fallen (Ryan & Haslam 2005). This is known as the 'glass cliff' effect and describes how women are more likely to find themselves in precarious leadership positions. In terms of risks there are two interesting elements here. The first is the perception shown by experimental studies by Ryan and Haslam that individuals are more likely to choose a woman to run a company if they have been told that the company is struggling – so there is a perception that women deal with crisis situations better than men. And secondly, women are more likely to accept 'risky' directorship appointments, whether that is because they are prepared to take on risk, or whether they accept such directorships because they have few alternatives, is unknown.

Why does it matter?

As previously mentioned, the International Centre for Women Leaders at Cranfield has been studying the issue of women on boards for over a decade. In the USA and Canada, Catalyst has been doing a similar census also since the late 1990's. Research in this area

has proliferated in the past ten years across Western developed economies. Since 2008 Norway has had a quota of at least 40% of each gender on all publicly listed companies. In 2007 the Spanish government introduced recommendations for its listed companies to move from 6% to 40% female representation on boards by 2015. The French government is currently proposing something similar and the Italian government is openly discussing the possibility. In Australia the governance council of the stock exchange has introduced the need for its companies to set gender targets at each level of the organization on an 'if not why not' basis, and the New Zealand government is also openly discussing the concept of targets and quotas. Clearly this is more than an issue of ethics and morality (notwithstanding those being sufficient justification for some societies). Let us consider, in brief, some of the reasons that so many governments are grappling to find solutions to this global issue.

The working population

By 2010 just 20% of the workforce of the UK will be white, male and under 45. In the USA at the end of 2008, 49.9% of the workforce was female (Economist 2010). Women in Europe and the USA are outperforming men at every level of education. Six of the eight million new jobs in Europe created since 2000 have been filled by women. Women form a substantial part of the available talent pool. Quite simply, if we select our leaders from only half the population we waste talent.

Consumption

Eighty percent of all consumer decisions are heavily influenced by women (Wittenberg-Cox & Maitland 2008), so marketers need to be able to target their female customers. Famous examples in the past have shown the enormous financial impacts of having females at the top decision-making levels in terms of new female-led product design issues (e.g. Nike womens-wear; Ford Focus interior design). In addition, in the UK women currently own 48% of the country's personal wealth. This is set to rise to 60% by 2025.

Performance and reputation

There is a growing body of academic research endeavouring to establish links between the proportions of senior women or women on boards and better performance at corporate or board level. The results, whilst mixed (Terjesen, Sealy & Singh 2009), generally show more positive outcomes. However, given the paucity of numbers, the challenges remain in establishing causal links to individual females. Companies with women on the board perform better financially in terms of Return on Equity and perform better on measures of corporate governance (Singh & Vinnicombe 2004). In a meta analysis of leadership studies in USA in 2003, Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt and van Engen concluded that women have more transformational leadership styles than men and these styles are connected with a greater effectiveness

Diverse groups lead to better corporate decision making (Maznevski 1994). The biggest differences shown by Canadian Research are in non-financial performance measures of boards with more women (e.g. innovation, CSR, employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, communication, strategy implementation).

Of course, a firm's reputation can have significant impacts of financial performance, and diversity at board level and below is increasingly scrutinised as a criterion in the procurement of projects. Overall corporate financial status is likely to be affected – for example, in USA Pension Funds vet companies for investment in terms of presence of women on boards. And at a more micro level, organizations are more likely to gain a reputation as an employer of choice for women, if there is significant representation of both genders at the top of the organization. Having sufficient numbers of women is likely to break the cycle of homosocial reproduction, in which current committee members recruit in their own image. In addition, having women in the most senior positions contributes corporate value through female employees in terms of mentors, role models, female retention and better understanding of issues facing women at work.

What can be done?

As mentioned above, in a recent report Sealy et al (2009) found that in the women on boards literature there were three major types of explanations given to account for the lack of gender diversity on boards. These were:

1. **Individual Characteristics** - including assumptions that women do not aspire to board directorships; and women lack the necessary skills to sit on boards.
2. **Interpersonal Characteristics** – including assumptions that women lack the social capital to attain board positions, and that they have difficulties integrating due to board cultures unable to accommodate diversity.
3. **Appointment Process** – several obstacles put women at a disadvantage in the board appointment process such as:
 - a. A lack of awareness of available directorships
 - b. Language use in the framing of directorships
 - c. Weak links with search consultants
 - d. Lack of diversity on current boards and nomination committees
 - e. Unclear selection criteria
 - f. Unconscious bias in the selection process

As previously discussed, there is no robust evidence to support the individual level assumptions, and research suggests the challenges at this level are more to do with stereotypes and unconscious bias.

At the interpersonal level, however, we found strong evidence that these informal, relational factors which are essential in gaining access to boards and successfully integrating board dynamics do tend to put women at a disadvantage.

At the appointment process level, the obstacles listed were suggested as important factors negatively affecting women's successful appointment to board positions. However, it was also clear that there is very little clear research on how the actual appointment process works.

Initiatives to promote change

We interviewed twenty international academics and practitioners renowned for their work in boardroom diversity regarding the initiatives they were involved with or had knowledge of. We aimed to find out what was being proposed in varying countries to address the paltry percentages of women on boards. The findings do not claim to be comprehensive, simply representative of various approaches. One of the first realisations was that effectiveness of such initiatives was hard to discern. What was encouraging, however, was that the differing approaches could be relatively easily mapped against the main barriers found in the literature, with focus ranging from the individual level to the appointment process. The initiatives also varied in the extent to which they were voluntary or driven by government intervention, either in the public or private sector. It is suggested that the initiatives that were found to be most successful addressed all three levels of barrier (Sealy, Doldor & Vinnicombe 2009b).

Individual level initiatives

Clearly aimed at the individual factors concerning why women are not present in the boardroom, a number of programmes were found in several countries helping individuals to become **‘board-ready’**. Sometimes these courses were specifically aimed at women (e.g. UK, Australia) and in some cases it was a case of endeavours to get more women onto mixed-sex directors courses (e.g. Canada, Norway). The course-participants would receive coaching and/or workshops in:

- Corporate governance
- Risk management
- The role of the NED
- Targeting CVs for the appropriate appointment
- Matching the right person to the right board

The challenge of evaluating board-ready training programmes is similar to that of any training in that there are issues about the timeframe and the attribution of success or otherwise. Whilst individuals may find the programmes helpful in building either skills or confidence, there is no way to gauge how those making the selection decisions will view them. Will they see it as a positive addition to the candidates' skills, or will it simply confirm remedial stereotypes that women require extra training?

Several large corporations also run **development programmes** aimed specifically at their senior women with the intention of retaining and developing their most talented females to establish whether further promotions were possible. They often include skills based training, coaching, sponsorship by a business head and mentoring from members of the Executive Committee.

Interpersonal level initiatives

Over the past decade there has been a huge surge in the number of **professional networks** specifically to support women, within companies, across industries, sectors and geographical regions. A smaller number of very high-level networks for female executives have also sprung up, usually run by private individuals, and their missions tend to be more specific such as “building a feeder pool” for women on boards.

Initiatives aimed at the appointment process

A number of countries around the world now **monitor** the percentage of women in their boardrooms (Vinnicombe, Singh, Burke, Billimoria & Huse 2008), with a few measuring the percentage of new appointees each year (e.g. Female FTSE Report). As well as measuring and indexing, the UK's Female FTSE Report also gives lists of women who are just below board-level in the ‘marzipan layer’, in order to encourage those looking for board members to consider more women. In addition, aimed at increasing the visibility of talented women in the pipeline, we found a number of examples of **databases**, held by either private or public bodies (in Canada, Norway, Spain and the UK). However, unless actively managed, these databases have not been utilized to any great advantage.

In the UK it is not mandatory for private sector companies to **advertise** their open **directorships**, and according to Higgs Review (2003), more than 50% of NED directors attained their position through personal contacts. This clearly encourages homosocial reproduction and does not help to expand the talent pool. In the UK, the Cranfield centre has been pushing to make the advertising of such posts mandatory.

What is perceived to be by many a rather crude instrument **legal recommendations and mandatory equality laws** are a direct way of influencing the appointment process. In Spain, the Equality Law of 2007 recommends that all listed companies on the stock exchange have 40% representation of each gender on their boards, by 2015. France is currently proposing legislation requiring state-owned enterprises and publicly listed companies to have 40% women on their boards six years from now. In Australia the council for corporate governance of the stock exchange has issued guidelines that companies reveal gender metrics at all levels and explain their actions on an 'if not why not' basis. Norway's 2003 Equality Law initially recommended 40% of each gender on the corporate boards of publicly listed companies. As the results were not achieved voluntarily, the law was successfully mandated in January 2008.

Comprehensive initiatives

As mentioned, our research suggests that the initiatives deemed most successful by our interviewees were those which addressed more than one level of barrier. **Mentoring schemes** have the potential of addressing all three levels of barriers to the boards. In the UK, one such scheme which is recognised as having been successful is that of the FTSE Cross-Company Mentoring Scheme, where a Chairman/CEO of one company agrees to mentor a senior woman from another non-competitor company. Not only does this address some individual level barriers, the main benefit appears to be breaking into such a high-level network and the knowledge of available positions that the Chairs/CEOs bring. In some schemes there are opportunities for the mentees to witness boards in process. This demystifies the goal of obtaining board seats and initiates cultural change in organizations where the Chair/CEO becomes an advocate for female board members.

Diversity Charters are another multi-level approach, which appear to be gaining credence. Whilst we found no charters specifically addressing women at board level

more general diversity charters are becoming extensively adopted voluntary initiatives in countries like the Netherlands, Germany, France, UK, Belgium, Spain and Switzerland. The charters are declared action plans, tailored at an individual company's requirements and include initiatives addressing individual, networking and appointment process barriers. Operating at both national and regional level, diversity charters are financed by a mix of governmental, private and public organizations.

Conclusion

In the UK the annual Female FTSE Report has monitored women's glacially slow progress to the boardroom for the past 11 years. The research conducted by Cranfield and by others across the world has slowly but surely dispelled myth after myth in terms of explanations legitimising the situation. As more governments become increasingly frustrated by the slow pace of change, there is a clear need for more empirical data on the efficacy of various initiatives to address the barriers. The most powerful measure is to mandate change, and governments and societies who have not yet done so, need to open this topic up for discussion. Interventions aimed at increasing gender diversity on boards need to be culturally context-specific.

In the 2008 the tone of the Female FTSE Report changed and rather than simply reporting on the status quo, took a more active stance of advocating change, making the following UK specific recommendations:

1. All directorships in the private sector be advertised (as occurs in the public sector).
2. Long lists for director appointments reflect an aspirational target of 30% female candidates.
3. Search consultants be more proactive in building relationships with potential female NEDs.
4. Companies set gender targets and report on progress in annual reports, including setting and monitoring of KPIs at each level of the pipeline.
5. Consideration be given to female candidates for new board positions in recapitalised banks.

In 2009, following an editorial in the Financial Times, earlier in the year, entitled “*How to build diversity on boards – a voluntary 30% quota would signal intent*”, the Female FTSE Report endorsed the newspaper’s recommendation for UK companies:

“Using the ‘comply or explain’ principle, companies with a lower proportion would have to explain if they proposed to fill a vacancy with a man. Chairmen of companies with all-male boards – a quarter of the FTSE 100 – should explain in the annual report why they think this is acceptable.”

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All roads lead to the top, or do they? How women get leading positions

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In September 2009, for the first time ever in Germany, a woman was appointed as the chair of the supervisory board of a leading stock exchange listed company. Simone Bagel-Zeh is, in fact, the great-granddaughter of the company's founder. In 2009, it seems to be the case that if you are a woman and live in Germany, you can be appointed to this sort of position only if you have a family connection. However, there's a saying in German – and luckily in English, too – “One swallow does not make a summer”.

Introduction: The relationship between organisational culture and women in senior management

The opening statement characterises the context in which to view our research project “ENTER!” on women's careers and organisational culture funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research¹. This project aims to investigate how organisational culture in firms impacts on the chances for women to occupy senior management or executive positions. Why are we interested in the relationship between organisational culture and the proportion of women in senior management? In Germany, for a woman to occupy a leading position is an exception. In Europe, only in six countries is the proportion of female executives lower than in Germany. This absence of women executives is common all over the world but in Germany the situation is particularly bleak. Admittedly, Germany has a female chancellor - our second swallow! - but the latest survey results confirm that the proportion of women in senior management positions has decreased.

¹ The research project has been carried out by Unique GmbH and SI GmbH (www.enter-spitzenfrauen.net).

Before considering the data, it must be recalled that many different assumptions exist on what constitutes a leading position. Bernard Bass (1981) aptly wrote, “there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept”. Research published by Hoppenstedt², the business information analysts, takes a narrow view of the notion of a leading position, whereas other research³ also includes lower level positions such as team managers or subject specialists. That lack of consistency explains some of the differences in the findings.

According to the Hoppenstedt survey, the percentage of women at the highest level of management in large companies is only 5.4%, in medium-sized enterprises 10% and in small businesses 12%⁴. In recent years, those levels have shifted by approximately only one percentage point. The most recent survey⁵ – published in September 2009 – scrutinised 600 German stock-exchange listed companies and identified that of a total of 1721 board members only 42 are women, that is, 2.4%.

The phenomenon of the glass ceiling is widely acknowledged. Our research question goes beyond this, focusing on how the glass ceiling is connected to the organisational culture in firms. We seek to discover how strategic, structural and cultural features of the enterprise impact on equal opportunities within such organisations and, above all, investigate the role which organisational culture plays. At the same time, we wish to learn how organisational culture can operate to encourage women’s success.

The theoretical background to the project

Like Edgar Schein (2004), we consider organisational culture to be the most important element of an organisation. In that context, it should be noted that, according to Ralph Stacey (2003), “the culture of any group of people is understood to be that set of beliefs, customs, practices and ways of thinking that they have come to share with each other through being and working together. It is a set of assumptions people simply accept without question as they interact with each other.”

² Hoppenstedt-Studie 2008.

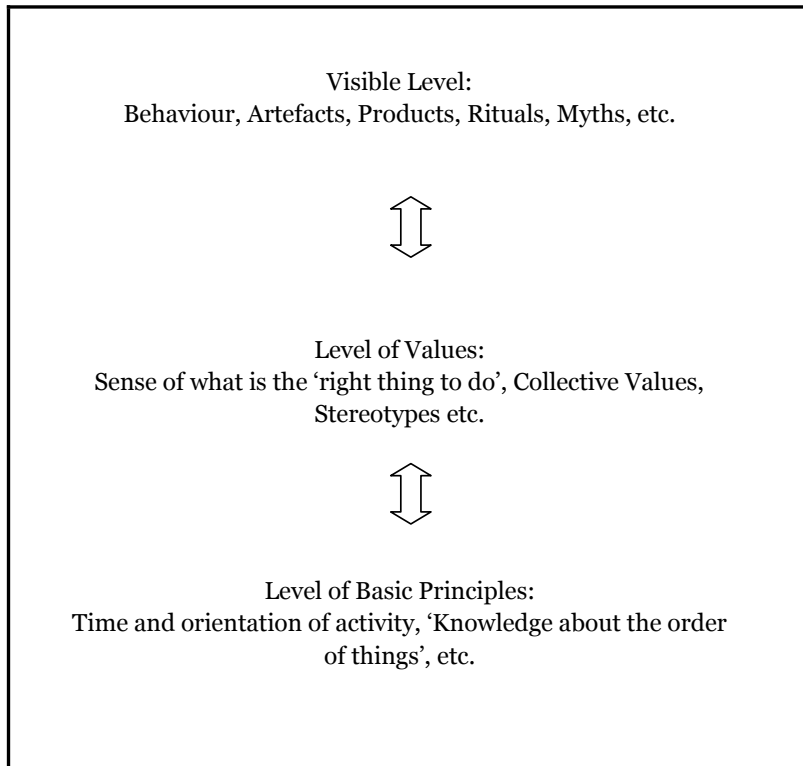
³ IAB-Betriebspanel 2009 and SOEP 2002-2006.

⁴ Hoppenstedt defines large companies as companies with more than 200 employees and/or turnover in excess of EUR 20 million, medium-sized companies as having between 20 and 200 employees and a turnover of between EUR 2 million and EUR 20 million, and small businesses as companies with fewer than 20 employees and turnover below EUR 2 million.

⁵ Institut für Unternehmensführung am KIT <http://www.ibu.uni-karlsruhe.de>, www.kit.edu/

In his analysis of organisational culture, Schein distinguishes between three different levels: the visible level, the level of values and the level of basic principles (see the figure below).

Figure 1: Cultural Dimensions (according to Schein)



In addition, we should add, our view of the enterprise draws on neo-institutionalist perspectives of organisational theory. This approach revisits Max Weber's (2002 [1905]) idea of the iron cage and recognises that every institution operates in environments consisting of other institutions. This institutional environment influences each organisation. In order to achieve the main goal of organisations, that is, to survive, organisations need to do more than succeed economically, they have to establish legitimacy within the world of institutions. To do this they employ different strategies: they imitate other successful organisations ('mimetic isomorphism'), they operate according to constraints imposed by legal norms ('coercive isomorphism') or they adopt patterns reflecting their interpretation of what is expected according to societal or

political norms ('normative isomorphism')⁶. As a consequence, we regard efficiency as only *one* possible criterion by which to measure success. In line with that approach, we consider firms to be open systems which are generally changeable or, at least, systems which we can shape.

Having established that theoretical perspective, we would like to turn to the specifics of our project. Our first step was to analyse the state of the art. This involved an examination of research on female executives, particularly in Germany, but also in other European countries, published over the last 20 years. Naturally, this took account of different approaches for improving women's participation in management such as equal opportunities programmes for women, gender mainstreaming and diversity management.

The state of the art⁷

Previous research findings focus on individual deficits of women, differences between men and women and illustrate an increasing debate on structural obstacles and the value of approaches such as gender mainstreaming and diversity management. In this context, a significant body of research has demonstrated the relevance of organisational culture and executives' attitude towards women.⁸ Some companies, at a formal level, have been influenced by concepts such as equal opportunities, gender mainstreaming and diversity management and by academic discussion of these issues. However, in practice, implementation of these concepts is generally lacking. At best, only certain parts of these strategies have been implemented. For example, it may be observed that when it comes to reconciling work and family life companies have discovered men as a target group and do not focus simply on women.

We consider it important to identify what employees believe are the causes for gender discrimination. For instance, if employees are convinced that women have individual deficits, they cannot be persuaded to change organisational structures and culture. Katrin Hansen and Gisela Goos (1997) identified the need for firms to take a clear decision to push for more women in leading positions and to adopt appropriate measures to fulfil that goal. However, no matter what kind of measures or approaches

⁶ See, for example, Nee 2005; Powell & DiMaggio 1991.

⁷ See also Ahlers 2009.

⁸ See Bischoff 2005; Goos & Hansen 1999; Lippert & Wegener 2004; Nickel et al. 2002; Olgiati & Shapiro 1998; Riegraf 1993; Wunderer & Dick 1997.

companies use, if they are to succeed, they need to be integrated into entrepreneurial structures and strategies.

In a representative survey, Rosemarie Kay (2007) sought to establish the influence of gender in the process of recruiting new executives in companies with more than 50 employees. She concluded that when more women participate in the decision taken at the end of that process more women get recruited to a leading position. The studies that we analysed asked different research questions, used different, but mostly qualitative, methods and produced different results. That is not entirely surprising. More importantly, however, the similarities in their conclusions are remarkable. Many of them demand that firms take notice of gender issues and bring about a change in internal structures and culture.

According to Ulrike Papouschek and Ulli Pastner (1998), for a greater representation of women in senior management to be achieved, firms must first

- recognise the economic efficiency to be gained through employing more women in leading positions,
- recognise the structural discrimination faced by women and, in addition,
- recognise the importance of mandatory rules governing internal processes.

This brings us to our research hypothesis: organisational culture matters! Unfortunately, the story of women in leading positions is currently not exactly one of success. For that reason, our aim is to establish how a change in organisational culture can be achieved. What is needed to obtain a culture which is both sensitive to gender issues and informed by the notion of gender equity? What would such a culture look like? Our focus is not on obstacles but positive features, conditions which are supportive.

Research design and sample

To obtain an understanding of organisational culture in companies, a trans-disciplinary research design is required, one that is constructed in a process-oriented manner and which includes different quantitative and qualitative methods. In the present case, we chose to emphasise qualitative methods. However, we do not seek to replace

quantitative methods with qualitative ones; rather, “mixed methods” (Davidsson, 2006: 10) are to be employed. It is assumed here that each method possesses its specific strengths, which can be harnessed for positive synergies in the mixed method. Likewise, there are specific weaknesses, which can be reduced through the specific application of more adequate or flanking methods (see Creswell 2003: 22).

We regard our own research activities as an attempt to develop qualitative research in a “nested strategy” (Creswell 2003: 212 et seq.) in which qualitative methods dominate but quantitative data are integrated in the design of the qualitative surveys and in the interpretative work. Qualitative approaches are particularly suited to the task of investigating new phenomena or ones captured in an emergent stage and enable the study of especially intricate aspects of these phenomena, such as feelings and thought processes (see, for instance, Strauss & Corbin 1998: 11). To investigate what employees and employers are expected to think and what they actually think about the culture of their firm different kinds of interviews were arranged.

As was mentioned earlier, following Schein, we distinguish between three different levels of organisational culture. For each level, a different method was employed to obtain and evaluate the data. To find out something about the firms’ structure and their goals, primarily, we used semi-structured interviews. These are intended to produce data concerning the values within the organisation. To discover something about each firm’s basic principles and its micro-politics⁹ we conducted problem-centered interviews¹⁰. Additionally, observational protocols were recorded, interesting data on the firm collected and, if possible, a document analysis was performed. These latter methods produce data relating mainly to the visible level.

Sixteen enterprises of differing sizes, in different regions of Germany and operating in different industries agreed to participate in this research project. The selection is random. However, to a certain extent, the sample can be said also to represent a positive selection¹¹ of German firms. The main selection criterion was the existence of opportunities for professional advancement. The focus of the sample is on small and medium-sized enterprises with fewer than 250 employees. The firms in our sample

⁹ These are the processes by which individuals attempt to influence others in order to attain their own desired goals.

¹⁰ According to Andreas Witzel (2000), that kind of interview is a theory-generating method “that tries to neutralize the alleged contradiction between being directed by theory or being open-minded so that the interplay of inductive and deductive thinking contributes to increasing the user’s knowledge”.

¹¹ By this we mean that the firms taking part in the study are those which are, of themselves, interested in equal opportunities for women. This follows from the fact that the firms voluntarily agreed to interviews on this subject being held in the workplace.

employ different proportions of men and women and only some of them have equal opportunities programs.

Figure 2: description of the sample

| Size of firm | Sector |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Small (50 or fewer employees) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy • Hotel • Mechanical engineering • Metals • Software development |
| Medium (51 to 249 employees) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronics • Information services • Water • Healthcare • Metals • Software development • Publishing |
| Large (250 or more employees) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemicals • Energy • Facility management • Mechanical engineering |

Instead of following a rigid protocol to examine a limited number of variables, our research is centred on the compilation of case studies (see Auckland Dul & Hak 2008). They provide a systematic way of looking at organisational events, collecting data, analysing information, and reporting the results. Thus, researchers may gain a sharpened understanding of why the organisational culture works as it does, and what might become important to look at more extensively in future research.

First findings

The data collection phase is almost finished and most of the interviews have been conducted. Currently, work is underway to compile case studies of the firms involved. In the context of this paper, we wish to report simply on one of these. In this case study, as far as we can say at this stage of the analysis, we find trends and strategies which are typical for the firms under investigation. It would seem that the specific feature of these findings is that they are, in fact, unspecific. As was mentioned earlier, we are looking

for evidence of a shift in organisational culture to one which is both sensitive to gender issues and informed by the notion of gender equity.

This first case study contains indicators of two kinds: those which point towards a shift and equally those which suggest no change at all. The company at issue is a family owned engineering firm employing 781 men and 71 women (in percentage terms, 91% men and 9% women). At a senior management level, there are 51 men and 2 women (96.1% men and 3.9% women). There is both horizontal and vertical segregation in evidence in the firm. Only two women work in a senior position and those positions are located in the firm's finance and personnel departments.

Part-time work for women is definitely commonplace. On the other hand, none of the men and none of those in leading positions work part-time. Interviewees could not imagine part-time working in management positions. Quite the contrary: physical presence and round the clock availability (at least via mobile phone) is considered very important and absolutely essential for those working as executives within the firm. For example, the owner's daughter - currently working as the firm's public relations manager and likely to succeed her father as owner and senior manager - said: "Can you imagine a woman in the job of head of distribution travelling the whole day and working more than 10 hours every day?" Here, she appears to believe in the egalitarian myth in as much as she cannot see the structural barriers, especially the societal expectation that women should care for their own children, that hinder women's round the clock availability to a firm.

Notwithstanding the different questions adopted for this study – we did not ask for the obstacles facing women or their deficits – initial results are disappointing. We did not find an organisational culture that supports or is capable of supporting women in leading positions. Instead, we find many unchallenged biases against women which exist at different levels of culture. In this firm, interviewees did not see any need for more women in leading positions. Furthermore, nor is there a commitment – whether written or unwritten – to increase the proportion of women in leading positions. However, one of the two female executives observed a slight shift in attitudes towards women. She said: "When I started in this company my female colleagues only prepared the coffee, they were the assistants of the men". Now, they work as equals. That suggests change at the level of values.

On the other hand, we note that management has attempted to formalise and standardise the systems for feedback and recruitment. This is a change which has taken place on the visible level. Before introducing this change, the most important criterion for recruitment and selection was whether or not an employee 'fitted'. Interviewees said: "There has to be the right chemistry," in other words, simply a feeling that the other person is right for the firm. Now, under the new formalised structures, staff appraisal interviews must be held.

Senior managers are expected to conduct those interviews and to give the minutes of the discussions to human resources (HR) management. The HR department discusses the different interviews and compares the assessments made by managers before returning the minutes to each manager so that s/he can discuss the results with individual employees. The results of the appraisal form the basis for part of each employee's salary. This is a major change. Informal discussions have been replaced by a written and structured process of evaluation. Both management and works council favour this new form of evaluation and consider it scientifically based. The objective of the scheme is to make the salary scale transparent and to cultivate a culture of meritocracy. Unfortunately, however, the firm ignores gender discrimination. The new scheme fails to consider whether the criteria used discriminate on grounds of gender. On the other hand, on a positive note, for the first time this year, the company has provided industrial apprenticeships for women.

It is generally acknowledged that formalisation of processes usually facilitates equal opportunities, in particular, to the benefit of women and, above all, serves to further the (economic) interests of the firm. By way of contrast, the statement made by one of our interviewees: "We need qualified people, not women" clearly shows that this firm is unaware of the gender issue at the level of basic principles. Our interviewee appears to believe in the myth of meritocracy. She can not see the informal hurdles women have to overcome before they can gain a leading position. In addition, it would seem that the firm is unaware of the economic advantages which result from having a greater proportion of women in every area, especially in leading positions.

A further interesting finding is the policy of the personnel director who wishes to support young men in obtaining a commercial apprenticeship. At present, young men are disadvantaged in the competition for apprenticeships because they achieve lower grades at school than young women do. The personnel director regards this situation as

unfair on young men. She wants to give them a chance and hire them despite their lower grades. This arrangement clearly pursues political and not economic concerns.

Conclusion: ‘The situation is somewhat paradox’

Firms which act like the one in our case study exacerbate the discrimination of women. They contribute to a strengthening of gender hierarchies. As was mentioned earlier, research findings have demonstrated that an awareness of gender issues, discrimination faced by women, and gender stereotyping is necessary before more favourable conditions can develop in which women are appointed as executives. In our case study, we have found a lack of awareness surrounding those issues. Although it must be observed that our case study firm agreed voluntarily to participate in our research project it appears nonetheless to lack any real awareness of gender discrimination issues.

However, we identified also that our case study firm attempted to pursue both economic and political objectives. In the light of the egalitarian myth, it is rather astonishing that personnel management seeks to assist young men because their school grades are so poor. Here, at a visible level, the benefits to the company do not appear to matter. However, in relation to the feedback system, these benefits do appear to matter. In that context, the firm wants to ensure that the performance of its employees is evaluated in an objective manner in order to achieve an equitable salary scheme.

In short, the situation is somewhat paradox. On the one hand, we identified certain changes at the visible level and the level of values. But, as far as we can see, no change can be detected in relation to basic principles. To understand this situation more clearly, approaches need to be developed which connect systematically different levels of organisational culture and allow us to examine the concurrence of both continuity and change in gender hierarchies.

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Forms of Spousal Support for a Woman Manager's Career

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In this study we investigate the work-family relationship from the perspective of a woman manager by looking at the role of the spouse in her career, and specifically at the different forms of spousal support. Drawing on the enrichment perspective in the work-family relationship literature we propose that the spouse can enhance a woman's career, e.g., by providing resources and offering perspectives. Our focus is on professional women pursuing a managerial career – a social category different from other groups of women. The data comprise altogether 29 narratives obtained from mid- and late-career women managers in a Finnish context. We distinguish three main forms of spousal support: psychosocial support, hands-on support, and career assistance. The results show that the woman's spouse can be a noticeable source of support for her career, although the importance of this support varies. Psychosocial support was felt to be particularly crucial and beneficial. Our study encourages organizations to be aware of the interface between career and spousal relationship in helping women to manage their careers.

Introduction

For decades already, researchers have attempted to explain why there are so few women in leading organizational positions and why many women fail to succeed in combining a demanding career and family life (Ezzedeen & Ritchey 2009). Indeed, the starting point for most of the available research on work and family is that the family constitutes an obstacle to a woman's career (see Beatty 1996; Hewlett 2002). More recently, however, studies have pointed out that the family can also be advantageous for her career. Support by the family has been named as especially important (Ezzedeen & Ritchey 2008; Greenhaus & Powell 2006; Rothbard 2001; Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer & King 2002).

A considerable part of the research on women and management has likewise focused on factors that hinder women's managerial careers (see Phillips & Imhoff 1997), while much less attention has been paid to factors of personal life that can benefit their careers, such as spousal support (Ezzedeen & Ritchey 2008). Also, research on managerial careers tends to understand the family as a single homogeneous unit (Välimäki, Lämsä & Hiillos 2008, 2009). We want to question such a view by suggesting that different family members may have different roles with respect to a woman's career. This article concentrates on the role of the spouse and, more specifically, on the forms in which the male spouse can support a woman manager in her career.

The relationship between work and family has been a topic of wide discussion for the past twenty years both in research and in society as a whole (Whitehead, Korabik & Lero 2008). However, what makes it legitimate to re-examine the issue is the increasing prevalence of different family types and two-career families, loosening of gender roles and recent value changes which promote a work-family balance (Greenhaus & Singh 2004).

A comprehensive meta-analysis by Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux and Brinley (2005) of the existing literature on the work-family relationship indicates that most of the available research is quantitative in nature. This, the authors claim, has partly limited a deepening of the theory basis. We chose to approach the subject by using the narrative method. Narrative is the typical means by which humans make sense of reality, and a fundamental form of meaning-making. Hence, narratives can also help to analyse and explain the meanings that women managers attach to spousal support. (Bruner, 1986; Bruner 1991; Polkinghorne 1995.)

The article proceeds as follows. Next we briefly describe the context of this study – the Finnish society. This is followed by a review of previous studies on spousal support from the viewpoint of managerial women. After introducing the empirical findings we present the conclusions of the study and discuss subjects for further research.

The Finnish context

The rate of employment of Finnish women is among the highest in the Western world. Even mothers of small children have traditionally worked full-time, and continue to do

so. Finland remained an agrarian society until relatively late, which effectively prevented the development of a strong housewife culture (Lewis 1993). Thus, for historical reasons, the spheres of work and family life did not grow so differentiated as in most other European countries. Today the various services provided by Finnish society are a key factor which facilitates women's participation in employment. The share of women especially in lower-and mid-level management has, in fact, increased over the past few decades (Lehto 2009; Hearn, Kovalainen & Tallberg 2003; Hearn, Piekkari & Jyrkinen 2009), although women seldom advance to highest-level management positions. For instance, women's proportion in corporate boards is about one fifth, and only 7-8% of Finnish managing directors are women (Kotiranta, Kovalainen & Rouvinen 2007).

Even though Finnish women's and men's total working time is almost the same, women do nine hours per week more of unpaid domestic work than men. The share of women's housework grows especially if they have children, whereas men's contribution to household work increases as they age. (Piekkola & Ruuskanen 2006.) Time- and place-independent work has lately brought along new challenges of time use between work and family. In two-career families it is still often the woman who is expected to deal with and coordinate such challenges (Tammelin 2009). On the whole, Finnish society can nonetheless be described as supportive of work-family reconciliation, as evidenced by the fairly generous family leave system (maternity, paternity, parental and nursing leaves), high-quality children's daycare and other care services, as well as flexible work time arrangements (Crompton & Lyonette 2006; Rantanen & Kinnunen 2005).

A look at gender roles in Finland from a historical perspective indicates that women have moved from the domestic more towards the public sphere in society, towards power and decision making, and men correspondingly towards the home, the family and personal relationships. Despite this, the balancing of work and family is generally seen as a problem of women, which is why they are also the ones considered most in need of flexible reconciliation strategies (cf. Daly, Ashbourne & Hawkins 2008). Work and family integration is seldom thought to concern male managers: a male manager is assumed to have a wife who takes main responsibility for the family, and so the husband has the advantage and opportunity to invest in his work (Daly et al. 2008; Pfeffer & Ross 1982).

A report by the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, published in 2006, suggests that in the future the male gender role will increasingly involve that of a

caregiver and caretaker. This implies that the work-family relationship will also become more similar between the genders, as the future male gender role includes more family caregiving (Varanka, Närhinen & Siukola 2006). But although the public discussion in Finland cultivates gender equality, the idea of management continues to be constructed through the traditional family concept and the man's role as the family breadwinner (Tienari, Söderberg, Holgersson & Vaara 2005)

Review of previous research on spousal support

Suchet and Barling (1986: 169) define spousal support as an exchange between spouses which usually occurs in the form of emotional, attitudinal or physical assistance. Earlier research on the subject, especially from the perspective of employed women, has emphasized economic and interpersonal support, as in the study by Gordon and Whelan-Berry (2004). According to their results, spousal support to professional women was mainly a question of giving financial security: the spouse was regarded as the one responsible for the family's economic affairs. Interpersonal support emerged as another form of spousal support in their study, with the spouse providing a trusted and reassuring foundation for the woman's career.

In a study on spousal support among female and male business professionals, Friedman and Greenhaus (2000) observed two main forms of support: behavioural and emotional. Behavioural support was divided into assistance in domestic matters and in child care. The former involved practical domestic chores like housecleaning, cooking, yard work, car repairs and renovation, whereas the latter comprised playing with the children, feeding and bathing them, providing transport and helping with their homework. Emotional support could refer to assistance either at the personal or the career level. The former meant offering understanding, advice and respect to the spouse, and attending to family matters; in the latter case, support emerged as an understanding and appreciation for the spouse's career and advice on work-related issues.

Ezzedeen and Ritchey's (2008) proposed a typology of spousal support to women managers with six main categories of support: emotional support, help with the household and with family members, career assistance, esteem support, and the spouse's career and lifestyle choices. Emotional support meant the spouse's

encouragement, understanding and willingness to listen. Household help involved cleaning, cooking, paying of bills and willingness to hire domestic help. Help with family members was defined as helping to take care of the children and other family members. Career assistance was about emotional and instrumental support for the woman's career, such as technical and professional assistance. Esteem support referred to the spouse's respect for the woman and her career. The final form of support concerned the spouse's choices regarding his own career and lifestyle in support of the woman's career.

Although numerous forms of spousal support have been presented in the literature, the above mentioned study by Ezzedeen and Ritchey is one of the few to examine support explicitly for a woman manager's work. However, their study did not focus specifically on the woman's managerial career, and besides, it was conducted in the United States, where women's and men's gender roles are considerably different from those in Finland.

Empirical data and analysis

The study at hand focuses on Finnish women managers and their male spouses. The data consist of the narratives of 29 women managers obtained through 25 interviews and four written texts. Purposeful sampling (Patton 2002) was used to select the women aged between 35 and 63 years and in their mid- or late-career phases, working in various industries in the private and the public sector. All of them had or had had a spouse or spouses in the course of their careers.

In the analysis we apply the idea of paradigmatic cognition; that is, we examine the narratives by creating typologies and categories and searching for similarities between different groups of data, especially by focusing what women managers tell about the male spouses and their support (Polkinghorne 1995). In the first phase of the analysis we read the data many times to become properly familiar with the study material, and began to analyze all the narratives to identify what spousal support could mean for each of the female managers. In the second phase of the analysis the forms of different spousal support in the narrations were categorized following the dichotomy argued by Friedman and Greenhaus (2000) into groups of emotional support and behavioural support, and added to a group of others. In last analysis phase we further analyzed the

forms of different support focusing on the target (individual, domestic sphere or public sphere) of spousal support, and developed three main forms of spousal support: psychosocial, hands-on support and career assistance. The data analysis was organized by using Nnivo computer software.

The empirical results of our study are presented below. Because we want to preserve the anonymity of the study participants we have substituted their names with a code number (1-29) and changed all details that might enable identification. Due to the limited space of this article we have included only a few direct citations from the women managers' narratives.

Forms of spousal support to a woman manager

Psychosocial support

Spousal psychosocial support in the narratives refers to the spouse's willingness to discuss and listen, and reflects a flexible and problem-solving approach to the woman manager and her career. This support occurs at the personal level and has an indirect influence on the woman's career. Examples of psychosocial support were detected in the narratives of 22 managers and in altogether 80 excerpts.

Psychological support could be either explicit or non-verbal. In telling about explicit psychosocial support, women portray the spouse as an active actor in promoting the woman's career. One of the women managers (8) describes her spouse's support as follows:

“I have always been able to rely on him to support the decisions I make. Sometimes he will question them and sometimes we'll have loud discussions even, but I always have a kind of certainty that as long as I don't get myself into a situation where I'd be away all the time, then anything goes. He really encourages me quite openly and admires what's been accomplished [by me]. And he's really good at giving positive feedback.”

A spouse who offers explicit psychosocial support also encourages the woman to look for challenges in her work, backs her professional development and inspires her to seek

new career paths. He is willing to help in finding solutions to questions related to the woman's career as well as family life.

The women's narratives further tell about the spouse's understanding towards managerial work and the woman's career aspirations, and about his active efforts to advance them. Psychosocial support means acknowledging the demands of a managerial job, such as long workdays and frequent travel days, and also the challenges of reconciling management work, career and family. In the following excerpt a woman manager (2) commends her husband's attitude to her business trips:

“... But I think it's, like, unbelievably remarkable that, that he himself doesn't ... like, if I'm, say, starting to tell about some of my own, like, if I'm going on a trip here or there, well, he won't remember those or where they'd be. By no means are they [business trips] a problem ...”

Psychosocial support resembles what in previous research has often been called emotional support (Ezzedeen & Ritchey 2008; Friedman & Greenhaus 2000). At its best, explicit psychosocial support emerges as spousal cooperation, or what might be referred to as a team operation. When both spouses act as a team, each one is willing to adjust when necessary in order to ensure family well-being, and also to advance the woman's career.

Non-verbal support, on the other hand, implies the spouse's role as a trustworthy background resource for the woman's career. This implies a more passive but nonetheless important role of the spouse as a silent source of assistance and reassurance, who himself stays in the background. A woman manager (20) describes this as follows: “And then there's his silent trust in that what I do is meaningful and important.” By his non-verbal psychosocial support the spouse gives the woman a free hand to actualize herself and enables her to pursue her career without attempting to influence it negatively or interfere with her career choices. On the whole, the narratives reflect the general feeling among the women managers that the spouse enriched their life and career, as compared to women who live on their own.

Hands-on support

The narratives contain several mentions of hands-on support by the spouse, especially in child care and housekeeping. This meant assistance in chores of practical nature and is associated with the personal and private sphere of life: the home or the children. Thus it can also be regarded as indirect support for the woman's career. Hands-on practical support was described in the narratives of 22 women managers and in 54 excerpts altogether.

Examples of assistance in housework in the narratives include cleaning, grocery shopping, doing the laundry, cooking and taking general responsibility for the household. In the following excerpt a woman manager (4) tells how she and her spouse share their domestic chores:

“I feel it's absolutely necessary. To me it's really the basis, we both know that both of us take care of shopping and both do the laundry and both look after the children.”

A closer look at the tasks most frequently taken care of by the women's spouses shows that the men were more likely to prepare meals for the family than, say, to take care of the laundry.

Spousal support with child care in the narratives is described as playing with the children, parenting, feeding and taking them to their hobbies. Other examples include participation in school events, such as parents' meetings, and caring for the children when they are sick. One of the women managers (21) tells how her husband took care of their child when she was finishing her university studies:

“At the time when I was beginning to write my master's thesis, I don't even recall having done anything for that child, like changing the diapers or anything. I guess I must've fed it, seeing as it was at the breast for eight months, but I can't remember that even. So my husband really took care of our home matters ever so, ever so well at that time...”

The narratives indicate that it was especially this type of hands-on spousal support that made it easier for the women to combine career and family at the practical level, and released energy for their work and career. In the following excerpt a woman manager

(18) tells how she and her spouse have together planned and organized their family's everyday life:

“So I probably work longer hours than what's maybe normal. But it's not... it works out. There, too, in a way it's my husband who makes it possible. Picks up the child and it's okay for him that I'm not at home there right away.”

Hands-on support was deemed most necessary when the woman had a lot of business travel and worked long hours. Many of the women managers mentioned that systematic negotiation between spouses about their responsibilities in the home and with the children was an important factor for balancing their career and family in actual practice.

Career assistance

The narratives reveal three kinds of meanings attached to career-related spousal assistance. This type of direct career assistance was mentioned by 26 women managers in a total of 52 excerpts. Firstly, support at the practical level could mean that the spouse took part in events related to the woman's job, helped in creating networks for her or offered technical assistance with job applications. One of the managers (16) tells the following story: “When I was writing my master's thesis I was in a real hurry at the end. I wouldn't ever have made it on my 70s' typewriter, but my husband arranged a dictaphone for me and the typists from [his] workplace typed up my dictations from the day before as extra evening work. A somewhat exceptional arrangement, but I have my husband to thank that I got my degree within the time frame set by the professor.” The spouse of another woman manager (28) had attended several of her business events:

”In that way he's been... and then of course during my time at firm X, well... well, he'd often be present at meetings with clients, in other words, what client meetings I had were always held 'avec'. Because I felt it was terribly important to include the spouses. And... and since my husband, although he's shy and quiet, still he's very, like, social, so, so that... well, he learned quite a lot of things about my contact persons through the wives, which I was then able to utilize in business.”

Secondly, spousal career assistance emerges in the narratives in the form of instrumental support, both social and economic. This form of indirect support by the spouse was regarded as valuable particularly because it ensured financial security, a good social status and a comfortable living environment. One of the women managers (27) said her spouse had always created a financially secure and riskless environment for her to build her career: “You know, I’ve always had my rear securely covered and always had very successful men behind me. So if things had gone bad for me I wouldn’t ever have been terribly hard hit, those men could have provided for me then.”

Thirdly, support for the woman’s career could be reflected in the spouse’s own career choices (see also Ezzedeen & Ritchey 2008). In other words, the spouse was ready to make compromises regarding his career in favour of the woman’s career aspirations. The woman managers told about their spouses taking parental leaves, working shortened and flexible hours, and even making a conscious choice for a lighter career. One of the woman managers (1) describes the career compromises made by her spouse as follows:

“Yeah, it’s been, like, maybe damaging for his own career development. Also, not that there’s anything, like, wrong with his career development in itself, but it could’ve been, like, something different had he wanted to put more effort into it, so he’s made a lot of compromises.”

Yet none of the spouses had chosen an actual ‘househusband’s’ career for themselves. On the other hand, the career choices of the spouse had actually enriched the perspectives of the woman managers themselves regarding their own careers and career choices (Still & Timms 1998).

Concluding remarks

This article describes various ways in which the spouse of a woman manager can support her in her career. Our viewpoint is in contrast to most earlier studies on the work-family relationship, which tend to emphasize a conflict perspective (Byron 2005; Rantanen & Kinnunen 2005; Rothbard 2001). The prevailing idea in these studies is that the family constitutes a problem for the female manager because it consumes her resources at work and at home, thus making both spheres of life suffer (Beatty 1996; Hewlett 2002). Our aim is to show that the woman manager’s spouse can also be a key

resource in terms of her career by advancing her wellbeing and helping her to cope, and by enabling a work-family balance and allowing her to invest in her career.

Based on our empirical results we identified three forms of support by the woman manager's spouse: psychosocial support, hands-on support, and career assistance. Psychosocial support was the form of spousal assistance mentioned most often in the women's narratives (80 excerpts), but hands-on support (52 excerpts) and career assistance (54 excerpts) occurred nearly as frequently. Psychosocial and hands-on support is indirect forms of assistance to the woman's career, whereas the third form of spousal support, career assistance, is targeted directly to her work. According to the results, women managers seemed to feel more in need of psychosocial support from their spouses than traditional help with housework. Although assistance with domestic chores and child care is very important for managing everyday life and for the wellbeing of the family and the children, yet it was psychosocial support – the spouse's encouraging and understanding attitude – that was felt to have more importance for the woman manager's career.

Our study indicates that a woman manager's career and family are tightly interconnected: it is not possible to examine them separately. Turning the perspective of research on managerial careers to cover the managers' course of life as a whole can open up new, fresh insights (Lämsä & Hiillos 2008). Also, the relationship between management work and family is usually discussed from the viewpoint of the woman, just like in the study at hand. Indeed, more knowledge is needed about this relationship from the standpoint of the male manager and the construction of his masculinity and fatherhood, to make the male gender more visible in the work-family debate. This could also have a positive impact on women's careers (Wood 2008). The traditional and strict sociocultural expectations regarding gender roles which require women to invest in their family more than in their career still place women, especially managerial women, in a difficult position, even in contemporary Finland. However, along with an increasing flexibility of gender roles both in a work and a family context, the work-family conflict will soon pose a challenge not only for women but for men as well.

Earlier research has shown that there is a lack of adequate organizational support, particularly emotional support, for women's careers (Priola & Brannan 2009). Our results indicate that the spouses of female managers actually help to patch up the failure on the organizations' part by providing this kind of support. It has further been pointed out that if working careers are to be lengthened, then organizations should

devise such practices that would make employees willing to remain at work (Heinonen & Saarimaa 2009). But spousal support, which incurs no costs to the organization, can ultimately be more significant for career and family reconciliation and for the advancement and lengthening of women's careers than any organizational practice. Still today, many organization cultures continue to foster the ideal of the efficient professional who is devoted to her or his career day and night (Burke 2009). While such thinking is hardly desirable from the viewpoint of sustainability or even of productivity, the support of the spouse can surely help to ease the woman's burden in an organization culture of that type.

Our study examined spousal support for the woman manager's career at one specific point in time only, and so it would be interesting to approach the subject from a historical perspective: How does spousal support change in the course of the woman manager's career? How does it develop as the career progresses? What might be the reason for potential changes? How do they affect the manager's work and her family? Research on these issues is needed especially since existing studies have failed to describe temporal change with respect to work careers in general, let alone with respect to managerial careers (Kinnunen, Feldt & Mauno 2005).

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Stories of Pregnancy-related Discrimination and Returning to Work after Maternity Leave

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The purpose of this study is to shed light on different acts of pregnancy-related discrimination committed by the discriminated woman's immediate supervisor and to investigate the decisions made about returning to work after maternity leave. The purpose is also to present how women make sense of this experience and to explore whether the quality of the leader-follower relationship is related to the sensemaking process. The research draws on five individual stories, collected via two-round interviews. The paper adopts the narrative approach for data analysis. Representations of several kinds of discrimination practices can be found within the narratives and they reveal that even being a partner in a good quality leader-follower relationship did not protect women from pregnancy-related discrimination. However, sensemaking was more positive in nature amongst women involved in a high quality leader-follower relationship than those in a low-quality relationship. The contribution of the article is threefold: first, the results challenge the traditional view that high-quality leader-member-exchange relationships lead to positive outcomes; second, considering the sensemaking relating to discrimination and returning to work deepens our understanding about working women; third, the narrative approach applied in this study is rarely used in conjunction with LMX studies or studies concerning working women.

Background

Becoming a mother is a fundamental transition phase in a woman's life (Gatrell 2004, 2007; Miller 2005). Motherhood may change a woman's identity, affect her values and take her decision-making in a new direction (James 2008). It has been argued that women are disadvantaged in work life due to pregnancy, motherhood, or even potential motherhood (Ainsworth & Cutcher 2008; Charlesworth & McDonald 2007; Gatrell

2004; Masser, Grass & Nesic 2007). Previous research on the maternity leave process (including pregnancy announcement, preparation (for leave), leave, preparation for return and re-entry; Buzzanell 2003:55; Liu & Buzzanell 2004:326) has revealed that the role of the immediate supervisor has proven to be significant in the work-related experiences of their subordinates or followers during pregnancy (Buzzanell & Liu 2007; Davis, Neathery, Regan & Williams 2005; Gregory 2001; Halpert, Wilson & Hickman 1993; Liu & Buzzanell 2004; Major 2004; Millward 2006; Mäkelä 2009a, 2009b, 2009c). Discrimination against pregnant working women is mostly carried out by their own supervisor or employer (Gregory 2001). The period of pregnancy has also been found to be a multifaceted phenomenon that has the potential to change the quality of the leader-follower relationship (Mäkelä 2009a). There is some evidence that the perceived quality of the leader-follower relationship during pregnancy affects a woman's intentions regarding her return to work, and that the woman is more likely to be willing to return to work, either full or part-time, when her experiences are positive (Buzzanell & Liu 2007; Houston & Gillian 2003). However, even though this phenomenon appears relevant for studies on management, there is a paucity of empirical work concerning women's experiences of pregnancy in the workplace (McDonald, Dear & Backstrom 2008).

In the management literature, and the leadership branch in particular, leader-follower relationships in organizations are studied at a more general level. Such relationships differ from each other in quality, ranging from high to low, placing followers either into a leader's in-group or out-group (Davis & Gardner 2004:446; Liden & Maslyn 1998). Usually, once the relationship quality has reached a certain status, it will remain stable. However, there is evidence that certain dynamics and changes are possible in the quality of the relationship (Bauer & Green 1996; Lee & Jablin 1995). The quality of relationships is crucial to organizational efficacy as well as to an individual's well-being (Graen & Uhl-Bien 1995; McCuiston, Woolbridge & Pierce 2004). Indeed, the quality of leader-follower relationships can be related to many different outcomes, such as followers' intentions to quit or stay in an organization, and also to various measures of satisfaction (Graen & Uhl-Bien 1995; Gerstner & Day 1997; Van Breuklen, Schyns & Le Blanc 2006). Moreover, it is argued that leadership is a reciprocal process of meaning-making and the core component of leadership is sensemaking (Grisoni & Beeby 2007). Thus, it is possible that the quality of dyadic leader-follower relationships also affects these processes.

Even though discrimination by supervisors based on pregnancy appears to be a very common problem, research concerning the different forms of discrimination and the ways in which women make sense of the discrimination experience is rare (Major 2004; McDonald, Dear & Backstrom 2008). Therefore, a sensemaking process – which is defined as “a process of interpretation and meaning production whereby people reflect on and interpret phenomena and produce intersubjective accounts” (Brown 2005: 1581 referring to Miller 2005; Rhodes & Brown 2005; Weick 1995) – provides a novel perspective from which to gain an in-depth understanding of those experiences.

In light of the above, this study aims to increase understanding about the forms of pregnancy-related discrimination, which are actioned by working women’s immediate supervisors and of decisions made about returning to work after maternity leave. This study represents how women make sense of this kind of discrimination and decisions concerning the return to work. The aim is also to explore whether the quality of the leader-follower relationship relates to the sensemaking process. Sensemaking has been suggested to be a narrative process in itself (Weick 1995) and thus this study adopts a narrative approach, presenting findings in an individual narrative form (cf. Adib & Guerrier 2003; Kohonen 2004, 2007). Next, narrative approach is presented followed by findings of the study. The paper ends with a discussion of the study’s implications and conclusions.

The narrative approach

People organize and share their knowledge and understanding through their use of words and different stories (Bruner 1990). At the same time, in putting into words events that have happened (or may happen in the future), the narrator creates his or her own world and understanding of it. Within narrative analysis, the focus is on what is being spoken, but also on the manner of speaking (Hytti 2005). Speaking is never a neutral process. Narratives have been found useful in sensemaking of challenging transitions in individuals’ lives, including motherhood (Miller 2005; Riessman 2002), and one can say that facing pregnancy-related discrimination by one’s supervisor may be one of those.

Even though previous studies on LMX draw heavily on the quantitative research tradition, storytelling enables individuals committed to LMX to reflect discursively

upon their experiences and make sense of the relationship in communication (Fairhurst 2007: 122).

The storytellers – gathering the data

This study interprets the narrative of five women who have faced discrimination by their immediate supervisors due to pregnancy. When initially gathering the data, I did not particularly seek out stories of discrimination, but was looking for participants for interviews about pregnancy and work in general. Twenty women were interviewed for the first time when they were pregnant, but had not yet started their maternity leaves, and then interviewed a second time about one and half years later (one participant wanted to take part via e-mail). The loosely structured, thematic interviews were tape-recorded, and then transcribed verbatim for analysis. In the first interview round, five of the women reported that their direct supervisors had treated them in a way that could be interpreted as discriminatory or involving inappropriate practices.

The following narrative represents my interpretation of these women's stories told to me during the two interview rounds. To guarantee the anonymity of the participants, all names used are pseudonyms.

Findings

LMX relationships

Bearing in mind that LMX theory defines dyadic relationships as either high or low in quality, and with members belonging to a leader's in- or out-group (Liden & Maslyn 1998; Schriesheim, Castro & Cogliser 1999), the way these five women represent their relationships with their leaders before pregnancy, makes it possible to categorize these stories as representations of 'good' or 'bad' within these narratives.

Mary's and Cathy's personal narratives had a lot in common and both made several representations which can be interpreted as being about 'bad' LMX relationships. The representations of the relationships between these women and their supervisors were negative in nature and the ways they talk about their relationships represent a 'not so good relationship developing in a negative manner due to pregnancy' Representations

about these relationships were aligned in both Mary's (written) and Cathy's (interview) narratives collected in the second interview round. Therefore, their narratives are interpreted here as denoting low-quality relationships and sensemaking is discussed later from that perspective.

Beth, Sarah and Helen represented their LMX relationships in a positive manner within their stories. For example, the dyadic work relationship between Beth and her supervisor can be interpreted as having been of a high quality, as Beth states: "There were some favourites [within the work group reporting directly to the supervisor] and I can honestly say that I was one of them [...] We got along with him very well, [...even though he is very conservative person] we knew how to handle him."

Despite three of the women having high quality LMX relationships, which ought to have been based on balanced exchanges and reciprocated loyalty (Davis & Gardner 2004: 446; Liden & Maslyn 1998), they all faced discrimination by their immediate supervisor. Furthermore, whether occurring in a low or high quality LMX relationship, pregnancy related discrimination is illegal and unethical (Chester & Kleiner 2001; Masser et al. 2007). The following section of the narrative study presents how the respondents, coming out of low and high quality LMX relationships, make sense of the discrimination they experienced and the decisions they subsequently made about returning to work.

Discrimination

The types of discrimination committed by the immediate supervisors differed between the stories. There are examples of tangible and direct discrimination present within these stories, as illustrated by conflicts over financial matters (bonuses and salaries for Mary, Beth, and Cathy), changes in work assignments (for Mary, Beth, and Helen), problems with obtaining information (for Mary and Beth), denial of training opportunities (for Beth, Sarah and Helen) and problems with holiday arrangements (Sarah). Other types of discrimination identified were such things as cruel comments about appearance (Mary), bad reactions towards the announcement of the pregnancy (for Mary, Beth and Sarah) and nasty comments in general (at open meetings for Mary, Beth and Sarah).

In working life, one form of discrimination very typical for pregnant workers is financial loss (Adams, McAndrew & Winterbotham 2005; Gregory 2001; Davis et al. 2005; McDonald et al. 2008). In Mary's story, when she starts to recount the problems she faced, she makes sense of different events and issues in short overviews of several situations, and intertwines these with her strong personal presuppositions about what pregnancy might mean for her working life in the future. First, Mary mentions a disagreement with her supervisor about bonus payments and accumulations: "Well, after I told her that I was pregnant, I had to argue with her. For example: 'we won't pay your bonuses', and she had surprisingly forgotten that last year they had promised to increase my bonus. And issues like that." Cathy also talks about very similar problems, and in both of these women's narratives, these events are represented as bullying, not as a financial burden to the company and even less to the supervisor themselves.

Furthermore, Mary's supervisor took over some of Mary's work assignments and did them herself when Mary was away. Mary says that the work was done "Incorrectly", and in doing so she questions her supervisor's professionalism, which she does several times during the interview. Cathy also does the same throughout both of her interviews. Mary's supervisor also removed her from several work-related e-mail lists and no longer informed her about issues closely related to her work assignments. Cathy made sense of the discrimination in very similar ways. Her supervisor had not hired any replacement for Cathy, and she was very upset about that. Furthermore, when Cathy's sick leave began, her supervisor immediately took the company laptop, mobile phone, e-mail and office keys away. Both Mary and Cathy presented these discriminatory acts as the supervisors' attempts to belittle their performance, not only to themselves but also to other people in the organization.

In Mary's narrative, pregnancy and maternity leave are construed as a risk to Mary's own work life and career, but also as an opportunity for the supervisor to edge Mary out of the organization. The supervisor is represented as "a jealous, unqualified, unstable snob" who has intentionally caused problems and made Mary feel bad. Throughout the whole story, Mary represents herself as a diligent and competent worker, whose performance was not negatively affected by the pregnancy. Cathy and Mary referred to the need to document communications between them and their supervisors and both preferred sending e-mails instead of having face-to face discussions.

When we focus on the stories told by those with high quality LMX relationships, we notice the difference between the ways used to make sense of the discrimination. Even though Beth experienced discrimination which caused her financial loss and she practically lost her job, it was interesting –but also very confusing–to note how she remained very understanding of, and polite towards, her employer throughout, making only minor complaints about the situation. Indeed, she referred to “the employer” during the interviews when she was in fact talking about her supervisor. In referring to him not as a supervisor but as “the employer”, I interpreted her to be highlighting her supervisor’s role as a businessperson and as the organization’s representative in that particular situation. In that way she divorced the supervisor’s actions from his personal character, not blaming him on a personal level but instead talking about her perceptions and experiences of the inappropriate treatment due to her pregnancy.

Beth makes sense of her discrimination experiences in a very analytical and practical manner and ties the discussion together with the organization culture, but also to the structures of society as a whole. This way she distances herself as a person from these negative experiences and does not represent the situation as an insult to her as a person or as an employee. Instead, she attributes the issues to the nature of her assignments and their related demands.

The acts of discrimination Sarah represented during her stories were the supervisor’s negative reaction towards her announcement, and some problems with holiday timing and training arrangements. Sarah spoke of how she was very surprised by her supervisor’s reactions but made sense of these acts by explaining her supervisor’s practical problems in organizing the work. Sarah also thought that her leader was worried about the possibility that Sarah would be on sick leave as much as she had been during her first pregnancy. The discrimination, or inappropriate treatment, which Helen presented within her stories related to tangible discrimination committed by other people in the organization, including her supervisor. The supervisor himself excluded Helen from one training event that would have been very important to improve Helen’s professional knowledge and support her career development. During the first interview, Helen represented her supervisor in a very positive manner, but of course, was frustrated about the supervisor’s acts. Both Sarah and Helen talked about their work life during pregnancy in generally very positive terms, but did highlight some individual negative events or instances of inappropriate behaviour for which their

supervisors were responsible. They made sense of these events by relating them in a way that I interpreted as being anecdotal or as some kind of awkward event for them.

To conclude, all of the women referred to their supervisor's personal characteristics when attributing the reasons for the discrimination. When participants with low-quality LMX relationships referred to these, they used very negative and derogatory remarks throughout their stories. Even though those with long-term, high-quality LMX relationships also referred to some negative characteristics or traits of their supervisors, all of them also used very positive and kind descriptions of their supervisor's personality, and in doing so made the discrimination experience softer. As we can see from the high-quality LMX narratives, each of these women attributed the discriminatory practices very strongly to external reasons, much more so than to the supervisors themselves. For all of the women whose relationship with their supervisors was low in quality, the narration was focused on their professionalism and contribution to the organization which was not valued, whereas those with long-term, high quality LMX's represented the situation from the perspective of their own exclusion from professional development.

Beside the actual discrimination, the women adopting different ways to make sense of their situations could be expected, to some extent, since earlier studies of leader-follower relationships have suggested that the quality of the relationship may influence followers' evaluations of their leader's behaviour (Dasborough & Ashkanasy 2002; Ilsev 2003) and therefore, subordinates who are involved in a high-quality relationship may not make sense of things in such a negative way as those who are part of lower-quality dyads. On the other hand, trust is a central element in LMX relationships (eg. Brower, Schoorman & Tan 2000). It is argued that if trust, which is based on knowing another well or sharing similar values (cf. High quality LMX), is violated, it is a threat to one's self-image and self-esteem. It is also unlikely that trust developed to a strong degree and then betrayed, can be repaired (Lewicki & Bunker 1996: 136). In light of this, it is surprising that women, whose trust towards their supervisors was betrayed, still made sense of the discrimination in a positive way. Moreover, there is also a perspective of reciprocity and loyalty in LMX relationships, and it is possible that these women who were part of a high-quality LMX relationship, felt that they had betrayed their supervisors' trust towards themselves by becoming pregnant (and taking the maternity leave) and thus not fulfilling "their share" of the work relationship.

Next, this narrative continues with sensemaking of the decisions concerning the return to work after maternity leave.

What happened after maternity leave?

Sensemaking is the basis of how people make their decisions (Weick, 1995) and therefore the ways these women continued their working life after these discrimination experiences are salient. When interviewed a second time, only one of the women was still working in the same organization, under the same supervisor.

When Mary and Cathy (low LMX quality relationships) told their stories, the narration was defensive and they represented their decisions concerning working life after maternity leave as things that they were forced into. On the contrary, when problems appeared within stories featuring high-quality relationships, the explanations represented proactive measures and the woman's own choice, even though the situations themselves appeared very challenging and unfair. Moreover, the women coming from low-quality LMX relationships portrayed both themselves and their supervisors as the people involved in the discriminatory situations. In contrast, those making sense of the situation from the perspective of a high-quality LMX relationship looked beyond the explanations of the events that had happened, and by doing so had used sensemaking methods to change their emotions from negative to positive by the time they told their stories in the interviews.

Discussion and conclusions

The aim of this paper was to represent different forms of pregnancy-related discrimination committed by immediate supervisors, and also to examine women's decisions concerning their return to work after maternity leave. The broader intention of the study was to increase our understanding of women's sensemaking of these experiences. This study also sought to explore whether the quality of the leader-follower relationship relates to the sensemaking process. The leadership perspective and importance of leader-follower relations emerged from the current literature on pregnancy and work. One main stream in leadership research that focuses on dyadic vertical relationships in organizations is Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory,

which contributes interesting viewpoints on organizational leader-follower relationships. The narrative approach adopted here provides a novel way to shed light on personal experiences in depth. The research drew on five personal stories, collected via two rounds of interviews conducted with women who were pregnant at the time of the first interview (but were yet to begin maternity leave), and who had recently returned to work when interviewed for the second time. These five stories were selected from a wider set of twenty interviewees' stories due to their providing examples of pregnancy-related discrimination committed by the subjects' direct supervisors.

It has been suggested that pregnancy-related positive or negative experiences are largely related to the relationship between the woman and her immediate supervisor (Buzzanell & Liu 2007). As this study shows, even being a partner in a good quality LMX relationship does not necessarily protect women from pregnancy-related discrimination by and inappropriate behaviour from the supervisor. These findings also challenge the traditional view of the unchanging and stable quality of dyadic relationships. Moreover, good quality work relationships between leader and follower are said to be based on positive and balanced exchanges between relationship parties, but pregnancy seems to undermine that reciprocity and can result in undesirable behaviours. The findings of this study clearly indicate that pregnancy is a very critical point in a woman's working life. This study highlights the importance of having an ethical and moral stance towards pregnancy (and an individual's personal life in general) in organizations and in leadership practices. Furthermore, these findings show the importance of becoming aware of different forms of discrimination and, through that, preventing these acts in organizations. On the other hand, the findings of this study also encourage the development and maintenance of high quality leader-member relationships in organizations.

Despite the limitations of this study relating to its sample or method, the findings challenge the traditional way of thinking about pregnancy-related discrimination and its consequences, and highlight the importance of the nature of the LMX relationship. This conclusion about the relationship between LMX quality and sensemaking could open up a new avenue for future research in the field of discrimination. For example, studies using broader samples and different methods might be able to illustrate more widely the discrimination occurring in working life and methods adopted to cope with it. Moreover, even though moral and ethical aspects of discrimination are not taken into consideration in this particular paper, these are part of the phenomena and thus

remain very valuable in further studies. For future research within the LMX field I would argue that even though it is possible to categorize the nature and quality of the relationship, the complexity of these dyadic relationships demands more attention in leadership studies. Furthermore, it could also be valuable for LMX studies to study longitudinally the decisions individuals make within their working life and the role the LMX relationship plays.

The practical implication of this study is the need to apply a multifaceted understanding of different issues that discrimination creates in working life. I estimate that all the supervisors who were the other party in the LMX relationships studied here would not realize that they had committed discrimination or seen their behaviour as inappropriate. Therefore, by increasing leaders' understanding and knowledge of discrimination-related experiences and emotions through training and development, leaders might be able to perform better with their followers in different situations. Furthermore, understanding that pregnancy and maternity leave may be a very important decision-making time for women, challenges organizations and supervisors to create procedures to maintain the commitment of female staff and their willingness to return to the organization after maternity leave.

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Work-life Reconciliation on the Way to the Top

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The concurrence of family and career for women working in leading positions can be seen exemplary in two studies and a best practice example. In our recent EWMD¹² study Gender Studies in Science and Engineering at Technische Universität München (TUM) focused on women in managing positions in Bavaria. The question was whether those women face special measures and support on their way to the top and it arose that they describe their success as being due to a network of supporters. Results show, that for those women who have children it is important to find family friendly structures in companies, supporting the combination of career and family needs. We also asked Bavarian companies about their supporting measures. Many have already started special programs to recruit women and to support their career. Another study with VDI¹³ shows that many students, women and men, in engineering study programs want to reach a leading position within five years and at the same time want to start a family. The research results support the need for the implementation of family friendly structures. Companies, which are striving for the best engineers have to change their management and human resources strategies. As TUM faces the same problem it got new resources through the German Excellence Initiative. Because gender is a crucial aspect of the application process in Excellence Initiative at TUM, Gender Studies in Science and Engineering coordinated a gender concept in all three funding lines closely together with the applicants and developed appropriate instruments and measures.

Introduction

Especially in Germany we still have an appalling little part of women in leadership positions in IT and technical subjects. Especially the job market for these professions is

¹² European Women in Management and Development

¹³ Verein Deutscher Ingenieure (Association of German Engineers)

manly dominated. It can be stated that the higher the hierarchies the more seldom you meet women. Although companies aim for an added value in the form of company bond, major employee motivation and soon return to the job after parental leave with measures for more family friendliness, questions for a reconcilability of career and family often remain unsolved for academically qualified technical experts and management. Part-time careers which enclose flexible working hours as well as flexible places of work are still rare in German companies and that's why especially the part of women executives is still low.

On behalf of EWMD Gender Studies in Science and Engineering at Technische Universität München focuses in a study in particular on women in managing positions in IT and technical fields in Bavaria. Next to women in leading positions we asked Bavarian companies about their measures to support women's careers up to management positions. The results of this study confirm another study for VDI, which focuses on the combination of career and family needs for men and women engineers, also in leadership positions. Not to forget is to show TUM as good practice example with its measures since being successful in the 2006 German Excellence Initiative due to reasons of better finances. Already 20 years ago TUM decided to get the most women and family friendly technical university in Germany.

EWMD: Successful Women in IT and Technical Professions – What Draws Them to Bavaria and How are They Supported?

In this study, the focus lay on women in leading positions in IT and technical professions in Bavaria. Only a special and very small part was chosen: A subject group where women are obviously rare and a German federal state that keeps especially in these branches a variety of working places ready.

The analysis of Bavaria as industrial base was the first part of the study. Statistics, regional and national measures for women's advancement were analysed to get a preferably exact impression of Bavaria as industrial location.

A detailed internet research of companies residing in Bavaria was part of the location study. Offers of companies to support women as well as statistics and documentations were analysed. "What are companies doing to recruit women, to keep them and to give

them possibilities to get into a leading position?" was the central question of the company survey, that completed the internet research.

Unfortunately we had to notice that the attendance to take part in our questioning was not notably high. This seems to be typical for such a subject and points out that the theme "advancement of women" is not even perceived as a location advantage in many companies. Because of the fact that those companies obviously agree to such an interview which valued their measures as positive and enjoy making them public, the results can not be considered as representative. In the centre of the company analysis were two interviews with employers in the Bavarian IT and technical branches. These were presented as so called "Best practice" examples for other companies. For this purpose Gender- and Diversity-delegates were interviewed to find out what employers do to recruit women, to keep them and to alleviate them the advancement into leading positions.

After own internet research of the number of female employees in the technical and IT area in Bavaria had turned out to be inconclusive, it was asked for this at the Bavarian regional authorities for statistics and data processing, the project group "Invest in Bavaria" and at the Institute of Job Market Research and Occupational Research. Unfortunately, no data moreover existed at the called places either. This was the same for the Gender and professional specific move to Bavaria. However, some of the international groups relevant for us with locations in Bavaria provide briefly information about the women's rate in the companies, partially also to the women's portion in leadership positions on their internet homepages. Statistics about women in leadership positions do not exist or are not being made public.

Next was an online survey with women in a leadership position in IT and technical professions in Bavaria. The results of this survey were completed with deepening interviews. In both parts we asked for the reasons why the women live in Bavaria and for the promotion prospects that the interviewed experienced. We examined how women are boosted and which measures and offers they used to get into a leading position.

In the course of the evaluation many exciting points, which are summarised in the following, arose: It became clear that Bavaria as industrial location provides a richness of attractive jobs that can be considered as a principal reason to move to or to remain in Bavaria. Besides, supporting programmes and women-specific subjects play a minor

part. The women who have decided to move to Bavaria do this because there are good occupational and career opportunities for them, but also for their partners. In addition, the location Bavaria offers a high standard of living and is perceived as an attractive place of residence. But: In Bavaria – and probably not only there – investments seem to be regarded as gender neutral. Those who want to invest are being promoted, and therefore it seems that everyone gets the same chance. Whether additional support measures are offered nevertheless for women was not observable. Hence, we assume from the fact that there are no measures at the federal state level. However, the Bavarian state government already awards since 1994 a women's conveyor prize in companies that excel themselves particularly special by women's support measures.

The interviews with the women display that all of them got very involved with their own career, sometimes without supporting programmes and role models. Often they formed a network of supporters on their own that gives them occupationally as well as privately functional and emotional support. Thereby it strikes out that most direct career boosters are men, while other women are often seen as supporters in the emotional sense. Also the spouses of the women are a part of this support network. Above all the superiors supported them to reach positions that they did not credit for themselves at all.

In addition to the career support by single persons the women search for direct support themselves. It is especially coaching that gives many women the possibility to deal with the particular position and acting during their career. Thus, many of the questioned women recognised their strengths and weaknesses and consider coaching-offers as very positive for the particular career development.

Networks also belong to important factors of the particular career. Besides, another function is ascribed to pure women's networks in comparison to gender-mixed networks. Women's networks are perceived rather than an emotional support on the same eye level and are estimated above all because of the inter-communication and the role models character. In contrast, networks with women and men are valued as more important for the particular career.

Besides the women, we examined employers of the IT and technology industry located in Bavaria. "What do companies to win women, to hold them and to give them opportunities for advancement?" was the key question of the poll which completed the internet survey of the companies. Both our best practice examples focused on family

friendliness to win women for the company and to keep them. Nevertheless, the study also shows that it is not easy to receive corresponding statements of the companies to their particular measures.

To sum up, we maintain that Bavaria as an industrial location offers good conditions for women in IT and technology professions to attain a leadership position because of the outstanding infrastructure. However, many possibilities to directly support women in leadership positions can still be improved by the companies and the politics.

Some points will be considered in point five in this article: "Recommended Course of Action".

VDI: Male and female engineers in the ambivalence between profession, career and family

In this study we wanted to know facts about the reconcilability of profession, career and family of alumni of technical subjects as well as of women and men engineers. As we already know that there are only few women in leadership positions, special attention was paid to executives and those who are going to be an executive. The statements were contrasted to family friendly measures and company offers to extract how companies can be seen as attractive employers.

The study is made up of a preliminary study and a main study. In the preliminary study the students of engineering and scientific subjects who were close to their exams were questioned with the help of a standardised questionnaire about their wishes and concerns regarding work-life-balance in the first years in the job. In parallel, Human Resources Managers of eight selected technical oriented companies were interviewed by phone about their companies' offers for reconcilability of profession, career and family. These companies were sized from 3.000 to 370.000 employees and employed many women and men engineers. The proportion of women in leading positions was between one and ten percent, the part of women in the headcount was between 12 and 50 percent whereas most of the women work in the production. Since some companies are globally oriented, they were under the influence of other cultures which particularly can be seen in the concept of Diversity Management¹⁴.

¹⁴ **Diversity Management**, the creation dimension of diversity, contains after Cox „planning and implementing organizational systems and practices to manage people so that the potential advantages of diversity are maximized while its potential disadvantages are minimized.“ (Cox 1993, 11)

For the main study the database was enlarged to get a broad impression of companies. Further companies were reached through networks, internet platforms of the ministry BMFSFJ¹⁵, the BDA¹⁶, the VDMA¹⁷, the Bavarian Ministry of social affairs and similar distribution lists of the VDI etc. It was examined what kind of family friendly measures the companies do offer (cp. Figure 1). This refers to concrete offers like an own child care facility or cash benefits for special family measures as well as to work schedules of the company. These can contribute to a better reconcilability of career and family when used accurately. It was especially asked for the offers provided for executives.

For the questioning of the engineering executives a standardised questionnaire was developed, too, focusing the point "career" it was asked if the female and male engineers are in a leading position.

For the study we assumed that family friendliness is worth for the companies at the latest when they are confronted with a low quote of qualified personnel, as it is already the case in some regions of Germany and especially for the engineering professions.

Our study focuses on the engineering professions as occupational field where women are underrepresented but increasingly looked for by the companies. In this so male dominated profession possibilities for work-life balance have been so far almost irrelevant. Focusing the increasing lack of technical skilled employees, women are spotlighted to those whom the companies can only find with offering accordant measures.

The central conclusions of the study are:

Huge companies got a lot of professionalised offers to facilitate the reconcilability of career and family to their employees. They also often have a clear policy to solve the compatibility problems.

¹⁵ Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend

¹⁶ Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände

¹⁷ Verband Deutscher Maschinen- und Anlagenbau

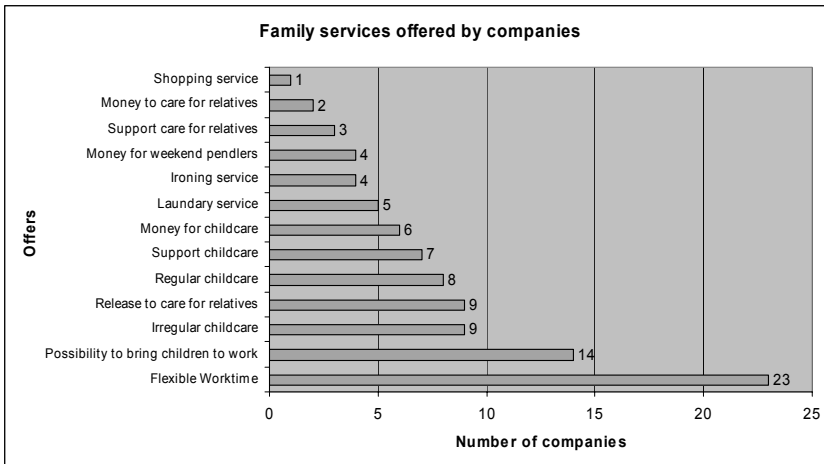


Figure 1

Companies that do not have such a policy differ eminently in their attitude towards executives who wish to have more time for their family. Already 75 percent of the DAX30-noted companies present their programmes for better work-life balance to the public¹⁸.

Individual agreements are possible almost everywhere. Female and male engineers need to conduct negotiations if they want to find an individual solution for themselves. Especially in small companies legal terminologies are the current way.

Over 50 percent of the questioned HR Managers consider a time-out of their employees for 12 months and more as negative for the company. At the same time they encourage their executives to make individual agreements. Women and men engineers very often only take a short parental-time. Doing so, they fit to the expectations of their employers. Family friendliness is still taken as an absolute women's subject. Men who want to break out of the traditional gender roles often face conflicts and irritations, because in technical oriented companies there are almost no considerations to fathers in parental-time. Fathers who want to take part-time or parental-leave face a lot more and different conflicts than women (cp. Buschmeyer 2008). The results of the pre-study showed that in seven out of eight companies it is principally possible to work in part-time – even as an executive. These persons that already were in a leading position when deciding to work part-time often have the best chances to be kept by the company. In contrast

¹⁸ http://www.lte.ei.tum.de/gender/images/DAX-Unternehmen_Nov09.pdf (Accessed 02.11.2009)

starting and carrying a career in part-time is still very difficult. The main survey of 25 companies revealed that part-time work is possible. In 16 companies part-time is even imaginable for executives. In eleven companies the possibility to work part-time was already realised by executives. In nine of these companies executives who work part-time are seen as almost or absolutely positive by the company. In ten companies they are seen as almost or absolutely positive by their colleagues.

Almost 69 percent of the engineering executives work between 41 and 55 hours per week. Over 60 percent would favour to work between 31 and 40 hours per week. For most of them this is connected with the wish for having more time for the family.

80 percent of the engineering executives wish to have better and cheaper child care instead of increasing child benefits. Missing public or internal measures for child care are co-responsible for long time absence of men, but after all of the female employees. Especially those who aim for a leading position feel a dilemma between knowing their children well by considerably caring for them and not jeopardising their career at the same time. Most of the women engineers asked state that they would like to stay at home for the first three to six month to take care of their children, so they are at least in the first time the main relation person. They wish that such a time-out should be compatible with their career.

Influence of Children on Career Success

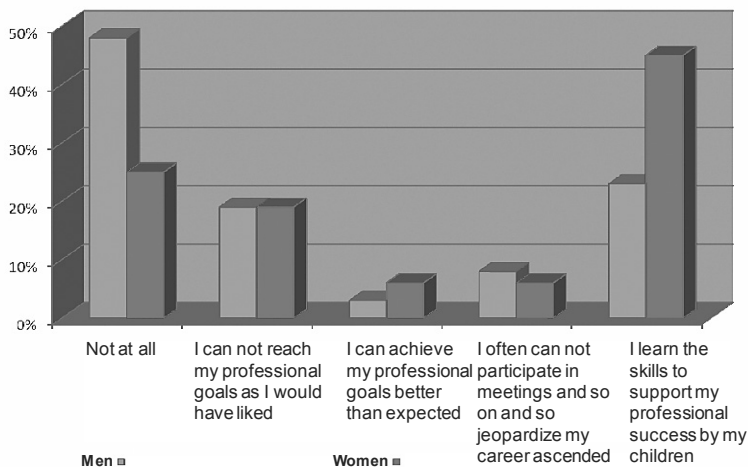


Figure 2

Children still have different effects on the careers of women and men. While almost 50 percent of the male executives state that their career plans are not influenced by having own children, this is only the case for 25 percent of the women. But female engineers state with almost 50 percent that they learn skills with having children that are very usable for their career (Figure 2).

Good-Practice: Technische Universität München and its measures

TUM was successful in all three funding lines of the 2006 Excellence Initiative launched by the German Federal and State Governments. One outstanding feature of the proposals was the integration of gender issues. Accordingly a “Gender Center” was set up in 2006 for creating the specific gender program under the management of one of the Vice Presidents. It was the vital step for the “Entrepreneurial TUM” towards realising these gender issues. The committee meets twice a month to monitor the development and implementation of TUM's gender concept.

A Gender Consulting Office was established during the course of the Excellence Initiative. This is an advisory service for all matters related to gender mainstreaming in the different departments: It also deals with the promotion of gender awareness concepts in research, tuition and administration. Several new funds were also set up:

- the “Family Care Structural Fund” to help scientists with children or dependents at home
- the “Gender Issues Incentive Fund” to support gender-oriented departmental measures involving structural changes
- the “Vocational Training Fund”, set up to finance refresher courses following periods of parental leave
- the “Parental Leave Compensation Fund” which provides funds to bridge periods of maternity leave (Ihsen et al. 2007).

The Munich Dual Career Service aims at promoting careers in science. It is a collaborating office cooperating with the Max-Planck-Society in Munich and the Helmholtz-Society. Its goal is to help the partners of new recruits to find jobs nearby. Thus it is contact point for all matters of career advice and relocation. Another main focus lies on creating integration between work and life: work-life-balance. The professional and the private life of employees should ideally co-exist and complement

each other to form a meaningful whole. Therefore, several additional measures have been intensified, for example the improvement of the child care facilities, the possibilities to work from home and part-time studies.

A special event in integrating gender and diversity issues is the annual symposium regarding this topic. In 2007 the first symposium took place with the topic “Gender and diversity in the technical culture”. Experienced and young researchers as well as students came together for two days to discuss gender and diversity aspects in research, technology development and in enterprises. They developed new ideas to implement gender and diversity into future projects (Ihsen et al. 2007).

Recommended course of action

With our two studies we are able to define several different measures for companies, politics and even the male and female engineers themselves for a better reconcilability of work, life and career. The most outstanding concerning the EWMD study will be illustrated as follows: Women that have gained experiences in the US often consider a rate regulation as the only possibility to raise the proportion of women in leadership positions. Companies that want to raise the participation of women particularly in leadership positions can achieve this with quota or target agreements. Our two best practice examples expose the possibility to raise at least the part of applicants, e.g., by “soft rates” with the headhunting or by specific address in job advertisements.

Another point for companies is the visualising of role models. In many companies are already women in leadership positions which make career successfully - even with children and in partial-time. Women can orientate at these role models, learn from them and interchange.

From the Bavarian economic and social politics there is also a backlog demand that concerns the subject women in leadership positions. Women's-supporting measures meanwhile are distinguished and promoted at many places. However, up to now the subject “career” plays a rather minor part. Statistics about women in leadership positions could help to spotlight the subject and would deliver dependable dates on which other measures could be based.

Adaptable and dependably long opening hours of sufficient day-care facilities and schools are necessary for parents in leadership positions. Because there is still a deficit

here, more and more companies are willing to invest in day-care to bind their employees to the company.

For every level in politics it is important to expand the activities especially to start at the specific subject “executives”. The increasing lack of engineers, the demographic change and the risen demand for female experts accent the importance for companies and regions to invest in measures supporting women in leading positions, as well as in childcare and family friendly working conditions.

The role of diverse career networks is the mutual support of the members. Besides, it should be their challenge to make the subject “women and leading positions” apparent and to sensibilise the male members for that, too. Furthermore, members of networks should return their ideas and information that arise from the networks to the companies and so contribute to a necessary cultural change. Women networks are taken as emotional support and offer the possibility to get to know some role models. For additional career support it is reasonable that women in higher positions are active network members and take part continuously, so they will be recognized and adapted as contact persons.

With the results of the VDI study recommendations can be conveyed for companies that want to support their executives with family friendly measures. Also advices and suggestions for women and men engineers who are already or want to be in a leading position and want a work-life balance can be deduced. (Prospective) executives who decided consciously for the reconcilability of career and family are normally willing to take this as criteria for a new job or even changing the job if seeing better possibilities at other places. Besides offers that are for all employees of the company, some point should be considered that addresses especially (prospective) executives. The following listing can support the companies:

1. Cultivate clear structures of communication and appoint contact persons.
2. Reveal a positive attitude of the company.
3. Convey role models.
4. Appoint, organise and provide standards for time-outs.
5. Cultivate contact during time-outs and show that a re-entry is favoured.

6. Part-time offers for facilitation of the re-entry.
7. Extend and adapt child care.
8. Provide adaptable working times and places.

Women and men engineers that are longing for a leading position normally deal realistically with the possibilities of taking a time-out. Women normally return to company after a few months, men don't take a longer time-out at the moment. But as our survey shows they want to take part increasingly.

For years politics try to contribute to the reconcilability of career and family and to facilitate the re-entry. The present study shows that there is particular demand for child care. The clear statement of 80 percent of women and men engineers that they are willing to abstain from an increase of child benefit to get better and cheaper child care facility offers instead makes clear that there is still a lack of offers that especially burdens the executives. Here it is essential for politics – together with companies – to attach.

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What is power? Subjective construct of experienced power among self-employed women

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Introduction

Power is traditionally associated with coercive and controlling patterns in social life. It has been studied earlier mainly through its negative aspects such as subjugation and conflicts at work or between spouses. In conversation of women and power, the approach is typically as women being subordinate to someone, usually men. Femininity is often connected to powerlessness in academic literature. In this study we are interested in seeing whether there are positive dimensions to experienced power, does power have empowering elements and qualities. We are also asking how women – especially self-employed women experience power.

Bird & Brush (2002) draw our attention to gender perspectives on entrepreneurial processes, illustrating that a different viewpoint will add to our knowledge on how individuals perceive and operationalize entrepreneurship. Women's entrepreneurship has been studied much less than men's although women entrepreneurs bring a significant presence in the world economy; it is one of the fastest growing population of entrepreneurs (Welter 2008). One reason for the lack of research is that the women's entrepreneurship is rather new phenomenon. Many scholars argue that venture creation is gendered in and of itself, and historically, the focus is on masculine processes and behaviours. The prior studies have contradictory findings about gender differences in entrepreneurial behaviour. Some argue that men and women are similar and others that they differ. The more interesting aspect is that women entrepreneurs differ from each other. (Greene, Brush & Gatewood 2006). Comparisons between groups of women will allow us to fully focus on women's entrepreneurship and its specific elements which are worth studying as such. Setting the spotlight to women can advance our general thinking on entrepreneurship and its fits and gaps. Accordingly

comparisons of men and women are usually focused on average differences and not to the patterns of variation. Further it may well be that the basis of comparison may reasonably be other than direct effects. Direct effects of gender may indeed matter for certain situations, but in other cases, sex may be a control variable where instead of explaining the effect, it decreases or increases it. On the other hand, instead of comparing male and female entrepreneurs, the question arises as to whether research would be more appropriately focused on comparisons among samples of women. The question here concerns what we can learn about entrepreneurship generally by studying female entrepreneurship. (de Bruin, Brush & Welter 2007).

Theoretical background

Power in communication theories

Power is potential, it exists everywhere. The overall basis for power is that A in some way affects B. In social sciences there is usually connection to causality (Dunbar 2004; Lukes 1974: 26; Rollins & Bahr 1976) so that A does so in some significant manner. We all affect each other in multiple ways all the time and the concept of power, influence, coercion, authority, etc. varies depending on the situation (Lukes 1974: 26). Traditionally power is associated with coercive and controlling patterns in social life. It has been studied earlier mainly through its negative aspects such as subjugation and conflicts at work or between couples. It is often defined as a relationship between the powerful one who has control over the powerless one (Dunbar, Bippus & Young 2008; Foucault 1980; Lukes 1974). Furthermore power has been connected strongly with male behaviour i.e. power approach and usage is expected from men through the male role expectations. So power is not equally approached and experienced among genders.

However the person who fails to meet her/his goal is not necessarily powerless. Power being an ability or possibility, it is not always exercised. And also power can be used in many levels and strengths (Huston 1983). Attending to Molm (1994) power becomes relevant when different goals of different people are in conflict. On the other hand McDonald (1980) claims power being relevant and important even when there is no conflict at all. That being the case it seems to be quite challenging to give any specific definition to power.

More recently scholars in the field of communication especially have stated that both power and dominance are fundamental structures in all human relationships (Burgoon & Hale 1984; Cromwell & Olson 1975; Dunbar, Bippus & Young 2008; Foucault 1980). This being the case it can be said that power may have many meanings depending on the context, however the subjective experience of power has not been explored in detail earlier. In this paper power is not seen only as the ability to influence another person (Burgoon & Dunbar, 2000) but also as potentially positive and productive force i.e. A and B being each enabled as well as constrained within relations of power (Knights & Willmott 1999) possibly empowering all parties involved.

In this study the focus is on women – especially self-employed women to see how they experience power? Does power have empowering elements or qualities?

Power in entrepreneurship and family business

Power in entrepreneurial context is often connected in different kinds of burdensome issues. The overall idea of having power is connected to the board or the owners of the company monitoring the company by controlling and offering resources (Baysinger & Hoskinsson 1990; Hillman & Dalziel 2003; Pearce & Zahra 1992). In family business research there are several studies made about arguing families, where parents are having difficulties in giving the baton to their offspring. Also siblings are often competing with each other when trying to get the best position in the company. (Mock 2004; Sanders 2004). There are numerous examples where the family business has got serious troubles and even failed because of the disagreements inside the family enterprise. The roots for the conflict may differ from issues of content to the issues of the conflict as a process and sometimes it is hard to separate these two elements. According to Gordon and Nicholson (2008: 241-244), inside the family business can be seen five different risk factors for risking the family heritage, values and commonwealth: nepotism, intergenerational struggles, disagreement over remuneration and rewards, sibling rivalry and not letting go. They also suggest several remedies for avoiding the conflicts.

Gender effects on entrepreneurship

There are several studies in social psychology explaining the different aspects of gender in social activity. These aspects come from prior experiences of being engaged to different structural positions than men in work and society. According to the studies women's attitude towards business activities is related to "cooperative networks of relationships" meaning that women are willing to combine the different characteristics of their lives together rather than separate them. These characteristics include their family and social life. Partly because of that women's businesses tend to be smaller and they do not have so high expectations on growing than men do unless experiencing strong human capital as social networks with other entrepreneurs, other business communities and also strong ties with their family and friends. Some scholars argue the differences being deep rooted to interpersonal orientations. (Carter, Williams & Reynolds 1998; Clark & James 1992; Florin, Lubatkin & Schulze 2003; Kanter 1977; McGrath, Vance & Gray 2003).

When evaluating gender we should not over simplify and stereotype women entrepreneurs under any specific characterize. Although women entrepreneurs are more than "other than men" (Bird & Brush 2002).

Methodology

The contribution of the current study is in its novel way of combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to research. The method allows for quantitative analysis and generalization to target population whereas the results also concentrate on understanding the unique content of subjective experiences on the phenomenological level. As in the cognitive constructive approach to knowledge states experiences are seen as both individually and socially constructed. On the every day level we all have practical experiences of this. We can talk about willpower for instance, but when the dialogue is over we discover that we have meant slightly different things. In essence the holistic, system dynamic view (Kauko-Valli 2008) allows seeing into what having power as willpower, power of decision and dominance feels like on the phenomenological level. What especially women mean, when they say that they have power? What is the experienced power connected to? As experience is also socially constructed we were interested in how, if at all, the experience differs in different subcultures of occupation.

Both self-employed women groups enjoy the social context of entrepreneurship whereas only family business owner entrepreneurs have the aspects of family enmeshed with owning and running the business as such.

Measures and data

An internet based survey (N=942) was conducted using a well established descriptive visual analogue scale (DVAS) (Ojanen 2005; for more see Kauko-Valli 2008) covering different dimensions of subjective well-being. The following DVAS items measured with a 0 to 100 scale (appendix n) were used in the current study: gratitude, hope, mood, anxiety, meaning of life, flexibility, optimism, willpower, dominance, activity, need for variation, physical health, work ability, appreciation of self, awareness of self, experienced safety in the environment, variation in the environment, appreciation, decision power, self-efficacy, sense of peace, experienced trauma, work as stressor and quality of work. The scale has been used in several studies earlier (e.g. Sjögren, Nissinen, Järvenpää, Ojanen, Vanharanta & Mälikä 2006) and has been assessed both for validity and reliability. The following statements measured with a 0 to 10 scale were added to the questionnaire for the purposes of the current study:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Happiness: | "I am happy." |
| Satisfaction with life: | "I am satisfied with my life." |
| Experienced environment: | "Constant change describes my circumstances." |
| | "My circumstances are growing in complexity." |
| | "Constant uncertainty describes my circumstances." |
| | "I feel often inadequate." |
| | "I feel often that the time available is not enough." |
| Business environment: | "Entrepreneurship is rewarding as such." |
| | "The future of my business looks bright." |

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| | “The risk of business failure is great.” |
| | “I have achieved everything I wanted in business.” |
| Role of family: | “Achievements of family members are important.” |
| | “Family members are essential for business success.” |
| Experienced balance: | “It is difficult to balance work and family.” |
| | “It is difficult to balance work and life.” |
| | “Business investments and rewards are in balance.” |
| | “Challenges and resources are in balance in my life.” |
| | “Different roles are in balance in my life.” |

The sample represented well the overall working age adults and was balanced in regards to age, gender and background education of respondents, so the findings could be generalized to the whole Finnish population. In the current study only the data (N=171) concerning self-employed women were utilized. Out of the 171 informants 56 per cent regarded their enterprise specifically as a family business, thus having family influence to a varying degree in their venture. A total of 44 per cent regarded their business as their own venture, without any family influence to mention. The age of informants varied between 22 and 71 years of age with a mean age of 43 years. Both groups were looked at separately (family business owners, N=96; other business owners, N=76) in the analysis.

Analysis

As the goal of this article was to understand how self-employed women experience power on the phenomenological level, system dynamic modeling was used as a tool of analysis. In the first phase correlations between the main components are looked at separately. It gives a picture of what the experience looks like on average in each group. Through this analysis the strongest relationships between items are detected and both

significant similarities and differences between the studied groups start to emerge. Secondly the highest statistically significant correlations are used to build actual system dynamic models (Kauko-Valli 2008). Although this approach does not provide information about clear cause-effect relationships it regards and values the intricate patterns of experience and the dynamics created thereof. The relationships work potentially both ways and real changes and perceived changes respectively can be taken into account. The system dynamic models further give a temporal glimpse into how the studied phenomenon may flow and evolve over time in the studied groups as potential changes in the components affect the whole experience. Instead of establishing clear cut cause-effect relationships or building predictive models the aim is to look closely at the two-way correlation relationships to understand more clearly the role of subjective evaluations of reality for experiences of power.

Results

The aim of the current study was to explore the phenomenon by attempting to appreciate the complexity of it by looking at the subjective experience system as holistically as possible. In this study power was defined as having the experiential facets of decision power, dominance and willpower. Decision power refers to the freedom to make choices in all aspects of ones life, dominance refers to taking initiative, taking change and leadership in everyday situations and willpower finally refers to being able to perform successfully in line of a chosen decision. First each concept is looked at from the point of view of its main correlates to detect patterns; similarities and differences in experience.

TABLE 1 Decision Power profiles in the studied groups.

| Decision Power | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| FBO-E Women | OBO-E Women |
| <i>Quality of work, (.56)</i> | Meaning of Life, (.51) |
| Satisfaction with life, (.54) | Self-efficacy, (.46) |
| Appreciation, (.47) | Appreciation of Self, (.37) |
| <i>Happiness, (.45)</i> | <i>Quality of work, (.36)</i> |
| Balance btw challenges and resources, (.44) | <i>Happiness, (.36)</i> |

Family business owner-entrepreneur (FBO-E) women N=96, Other business owner-entrepreneur (OBO-E) women N=76 All presented correlations are on the $p \leq .001$ level, five highest correlations were included in the table.

Decision power profiles (table 1) in the studied groups give a detailed picture of the highest five correlations in each studied group. It is notable that no negative correlations were found on this level of analysis. On one hand it can be seen that the listed correlates have potential to affect the subjective sense of decision power and on the other hand changes in experienced decision power may equally affect the listed constructs. From the point of view of analysis it does not matter whether the changes are real or only perceived ones, both have potential to change the phenomenological level of experience. This point of analysis makes it easier to understand how for example emotions such as happiness may play a crucial role in our experience of having decision power over our lives. Any independent changes in the level of experienced happiness have the potential to enhance the sense of having decision power in both groups.

It can be seen from the profiles that the construct of experience differs slightly between the studied groups. Both quality of work and happiness is connected to decision power in both groups but it has a slightly different importance for them. For family business owner entrepreneurs decision power is connected to quality of work, whereas for other business owner entrepreneurs it is more of a construct of overall meaning of life. For family business owner entrepreneurs satisfaction with life and being appreciated by others is part of the decision power experience on the phenomenological level, whereas other business owner entrepreneurs connect decision power to both sense of self-efficacy and appreciation of self.

TABLE 2 Dominance profiles in the studied groups.

| Dominance | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| FBO-E Women | OBO-E Women |
| <i>Self-efficacy</i> , (.54) | Quality of Work, (.33), (.004) |
| <i>Willpower</i> , (.45) | <i>Self-Efficacy</i> , (.31), (.007) |
| Hope, (.42) | Stress at Work, (.31), (.007) |
| Appreciation of self, (.35) | <i>Willpower</i> , (.28), (.014) |
| Sense of peace, (.30) | Sense of Control, (.28), (.017) |

Family business owner-entrepreneur (FBO-E) women N=96, Other business owner-entrepreneur (OBO-E) women N=76 All FBO-E correlations are on the $p \leq .001$ level, five highest correlations were included in the table.

Dominance profiles (table 2) reveal that the experience of it varied greatly between the studied groups. For family business owner entrepreneurs the correlations were on the highest level of significance, whereas for other business owners the correlations were not so strong to begin with. The correlations are statistically significant but on a lower level. For both groups dominance is connected to a sense of self-efficacy and willpower although the importance of them vary somewhat. For family business owners thinking and acting in dominant ways is connected to being hopeful, appreciating one self and to a sense of peace. For other business owners dominance is connected to quality of work, being stressed at work and to a sense of being in control. It can be noted that dominance seems to be a bit ambiguous experience for other business owner-entrepreneurs.

TABLE 3 Willpower profiles in the studied groups.

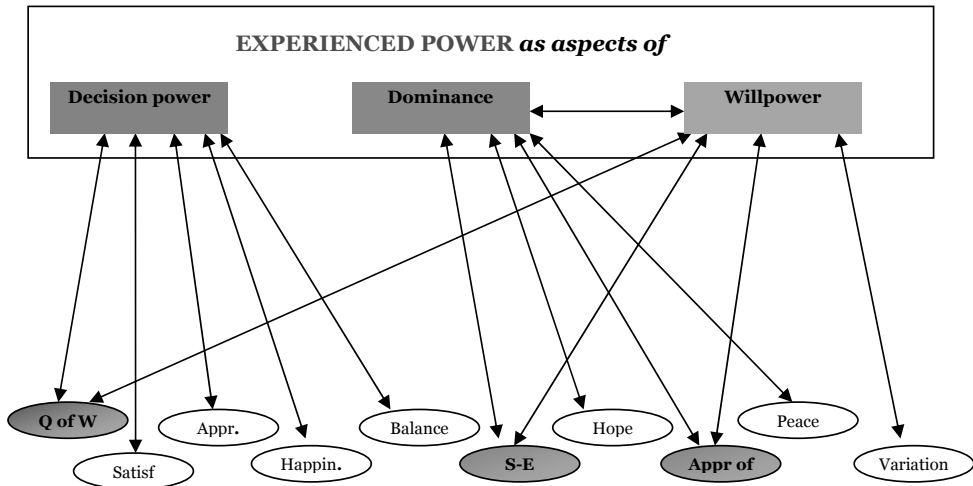
| Willpower | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| FBO-E Women | OBO-E Women |
| <i>Dominance</i> , (.45) | Activity, (.46), (.000) |
| Appreciation of self, (.40) | Decision power, (.31), (.007) |
| <i>Self-efficacy</i> , (.37) | Physical Health, (.31), (.008) |
| Quality of work, (.35) | <i>Dominance</i> , (.28), (.014) |
| Variation in environment, (.34) | <i>Self-Efficacy</i> , (.28), (.014) |

Family business owner-entrepreneur (FBO-E) women N=96, Other business owner-entrepreneur (OBO-E) women N=76
 All FBO-E correlations are on the $p \leq .001$ level, five highest correlations were included in the table.

Willpower profiles (table 3) for the studied groups reveal that willpower is connected to dominance and self-efficacy in both groups. For family business owners the connection between willpower and dominance is strongest, whereas with other business owners it is closest to leading generally an active lifestyle. Here again for other business owners the correlations were statistically significant but on a lower level, pointing towards a certain level of ambiguity in the experience on the group level. For family business owners willpower is further connected to appreciation of self, quality of work and to variation in environment, whereas for other business owners it is more of a reflection of

being generally active and is connected to decision power as well as to overall physical health.

System dynamic model of experienced power - family business owners

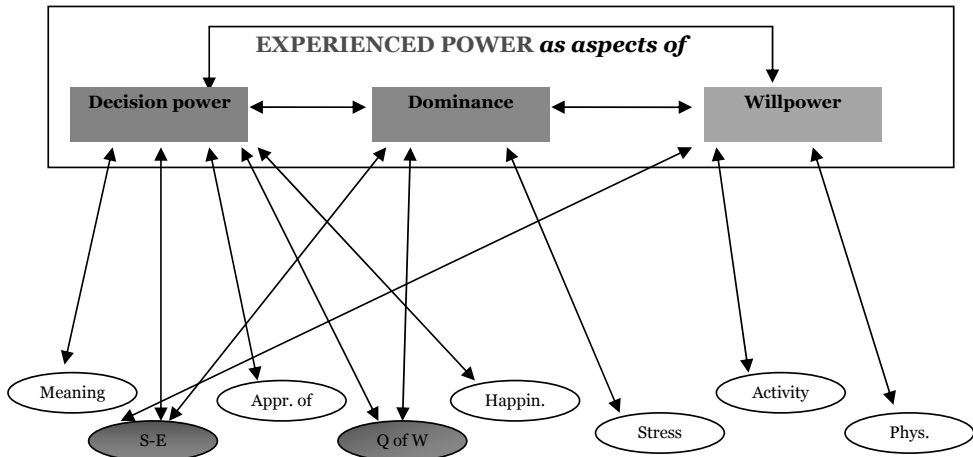


Used abbreviations: Q of W = Quality of Work, Satisf. = Satisfaction with life, Appr. = Being Appreciated by Others, Happin. = Level of Experienced Happiness, Balance = Balance Between Challenges and Resources, S-E = Self-Efficacy, Hope = Level of Experienced Hope, Appr of = Appreciation of Self, Peace = Level of Experienced Sense of Peace and Variation = Variation Offered in the Environment.

Looking at power as a holistic, dynamic system of intertwined constructs gives a picture of how changes in experience may be created over time. In the picture the three main aspects of experienced power, namely decision power, dominance and willpower are looked at through the highest five correlations that were presented earlier. It can be seen that there are both direct and indirect connections between the main aspects of experienced power. For instance willpower is directly connected to dominance but only indirectly through quality of work to decision power in the group of family business owners. It can also be seen that the most potential for change is connected to changes in quality of work, sense of self-efficacy and appreciation of self. As the correlations work both ways independent changes, whether real or perceived, have the potential to affect the way power is experienced. For example if the sense of self-efficacy is

enhanced for any reason at all it is most likely to affect the level of experienced power, especially the aspects of dominance and willpower.

System dynamic model of experienced power – other business owners



Used abbreviations: Meaning = Meaning of life, S-E = Self-Efficacy, Appr. of = Appreciation of Self, Q of W = Quality of Work, Happin. = Level of Experienced Happiness, Stress = Level of Experienced Stress, Activity = Level of Activity and Phys. = Physical condition.

For other business owners there are both direct and indirect connections between the main aspects of power as decision power, dominance and willpower. For example decision power is connected directly to both dominance and willpower and indirectly to willpower through dominance and self-efficacy and to dominance by self-efficacy and quality of work. The most potent constructs from the point of view of change are the constructs of self-efficacy and quality of work. Any independent changes in these constructs have potential to change the way power is experienced and the other way around. Further it can be seen that although constructs like happiness are important they only have potential to affect one aspect, namely decision power, of the experienced power. Comparing the system dynamic models between family business owners and other business owners it can be noted that for both self-efficacy and quality of work are important from the point of view of experienced power. It can be also noted that for

family business owners power is connected significantly to a sense of appreciation of self.

Discussion

In this article we were interested in seeing whether there were positive dimensions to experienced power among female business owners, whether power had empowering elements and qualities to it. We were also interested in seeing how women, especially in the self-employment context, experienced power. What women mean when they say that they have power? What is the experienced power connected to?

Although power seems to have a somewhat negative reputation both in general discussion and in academic writing, for self-employed women some empowering connections can be found. Power is connected to self-efficacy and quality of work in both groups and also to appreciation of self in the group of family business owners all of which are potentially empowering experiences. Empowerment being a complex phenomenon and not opened in detail in this paper; can be seen as a strong and positive element in women entrepreneurs' life in general. Experienced empowerment may add to persons' contribution to entrepreneurial activity and resources.

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Second McCarthyism: 'Have you no decency, Sir?'¹⁹

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'To get power, you need to display absolute pettiness. To exercise power, you need to show true greatness'. Napoleon

Hitherto, most research on leadership through the gender lens has centred on exercising leadership among those who have achieved it; differences in male and female leadership styles and behaviour; and gendered organizations. These researches form the basis of my paper. Daniel Goldman and Richard Boyatzis (2008) have found that leadership requires social and emotional intelligence which is correlated with outstanding performance. Hopkins and Billimoria's empirical research on top level executives infers that "perhaps executive women are more similar to, than different from, executive men due to their socialization into leadership roles. It is likely that males and females in this category have assimilated into their leadership roles and become more homogeneous than dissimilar ... (but) the story is different for typical male and typical female where there are obvious differences." (Hopkins and Billimoria, 2008). Women possess better social and emotional skills and yet only the atypical reach the top. This large band of typical women managers, stranded at the levels below, is my focus, as clues to the problem and solutions thereof reside here.

Meyerson and Fletcher (2000) are of the view that "it's not a revolution but a strategy of small wins – of incremental changes aimed at the subtle discriminatory forces that still reside ... today overt displays are rare ... (discrimination) lingers in the common work practices and cultural norms that appear unbiased." These authors refer to this phenomenon as 'The problem without a name' – a persistent covert symptom, difficult to isolate and diagnose. The feminist movement came through the revolutionary phase

¹⁹ 'Have you no decency, Sir' is the punch line spoken to Joseph McCarthy by Joseph Welch who appeared before the former and was interrogated for a colleague's communist involvement. McCarthy was the leading American anti-communist figure in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

when the problem was overt, followed by a phase of self-empowerment that opened doors for women in many organizations, hitherto barred to them, to the present stage when we have enough legislation but a covert ‘problem without a name’ still persists. Here, the confrontationist ways of yore may not work because in principle, no one denies the women equal opportunity – yet in practice, as recognized in organizational theory, structures (Acker, 1990) are endemic to the problem and individual attitudes take time to change. How about focusing on women protagonists themselves and not on organizations and discussing some tactical moves to manage all the ‘problems without a name’ in some creative ways?

Hypothesis

The leadership course can be broken into two steps, requiring two very different sets of skills in the same person:

- ‘Navigating the path to leadership’, which requires transactional style (even maneuvering) and ‘beyond-the-horizon’ ways so that women arrive at the level playing field first. It may even involve battle field tactics of the Sun Tzu kind. This stage has not been researched much.
- ‘Staying the leadership course’ where women’s ‘transformational leadership style’ is well researched and documented.

The transactional style, as the name suggests, leans more towards tact, even manoeuvring, street-smartness and leverages the ‘give and take’ in a non-personal, emotionally neutral interaction. Here, the gain is immediate. Transformational style, on the other hand, is concerned with improving the performance of self and the followers, through a strong set of internal values and ideals of the leader, to support a greater good. Transformation takes time but is more effective in the long run.

I suggest a sequential (rather than concurrent) employment of transactional style first (for navigating the path to leadership) followed by the transformational style that consolidates the gains of leadership position, once it is reached. An integrated and simultaneous use may be theoretically desirable but in practice, might jeopardize

women's ascent. Napoleon's epigraph may be shockingly extremist ('pettiness' sounds uncomplimentary), yet it contains grains of practical wisdom. If 'pettiness' is replaced by 'transactional' in Napoleon's axiom, we can explore a new paradigm that enhances the effectiveness of women approaching the glass ceiling.

The purpose of this paper is to look at some case studies of women who have managed to 'navigate the path to leadership' successfully and find some pragmatic and effective lessons that can be emulated by others for learning the 'art of getting there'.

Approach

There exists reciprocity between real Life and the world of Art – both draw from each other and inform each other. We can go to one to understand and decode the other. Certain well made movies, based on real life stories, become good case studies for analyzing issues that cannot be explored in real life. Art is capable of articulating back of the mind thinking of different characters and experimenting with different options like in a 'laboratory'. Also, a movie tells the story through a visual where the 'body' of the protagonist itself acts like a text for decoding the non-verbal. I have selected two movies: *The Contender*²⁰ (US/2000), about a lady Senator contending for the Vice-Presidency of the US; and *Godmother*²¹ (India/1998) about a rural woman in Gujarat, India, whose widowhood forces her to succeed her underworld don husband. Both women use their innovative but diverse styles as they navigate the path to leadership. They are two extremes of the spectrum: the former, an educated and evolved woman and therefore, better poised to withstand challenges; the latter, a simple rural woman with no education or empowerment, but instinctive native wisdom and survival instinct that serendipitously takes her to leadership.

Both stories are inspired by real life or near real life characters and situations, and can therefore unfold real time lessons.

²⁰ *The Contender* (2000/167 minutes/English/USA), starring Jeff Bridges as the President, Joan Allen as Laine Hanson.

²¹ *Godmother* (1998/Hindi/India), starring Shabana Azmi as Rambhi. Shabana's interpretation of Rambhi's character made Rambhi's strife more powerful by using the actor's body as a text through gestures, body language and speech.

The Contender (USA/2000)

This came close on the heels of Clinton saga in the US where the dictum was clear: the scandal neither matters to a man nor demolishes his career. Is it the same for a woman? perhaps not. Ironically, in a country that boasts of Affirmative Action²², equitable society and the rest of legislative support, ‘the problem without a name’ still disables many women from leadership positions. How does a woman manage the sexual McCarthyism directed at her? *The Contender* is an attempt to seek directions for ‘our daughters’ today.

The President needs to nominate a Vice President, post the demise of the incumbent. Senator Jack Hathaway has no claim to ‘greatness’ (no Vietnam) but is a front runner. In a clairvoyant move, he sets up an interview idealizing statesmen like Sadat, Mandela and Churchill when a car plunges off the overhead bridge, into the river. As if on cue, Hathaway jumps in - a kind of surrogate valor, but the woman dies. The President withdraws Jack’s candidacy because the similarity between Hathaway and Senator Ted Kennedy²³ is too close. The trick works on media – he is a hero - nobody seems to question his manipulative behaviour.

The TINA factor makes the President choose a woman - Senator Laine Hanson from Ohio, the daughter of a Republican Congressman - a choice that will make ‘Troy alert and friends proud’. Her confirmation may be difficult because the Chairman of the Confirmation-Committee, Shelly Runyon, is a near ‘second McCarthy’ who will not ‘confirm a woman just because she is a woman ... and that too a looker’. Runyon has already launched a smear campaign against her - an aggressive check on all her private records, bank accounts, medical details, speeches, campaign irregularity (routine) but also on any trivial indiscretion in her past to “get the bitch in the belly”. If President had nominated Hathaway, Shelly’s support to him would have been unconditional: “once we say she is wrong, we don’t have to say you are right”. Obviously, the rules are different for men and women.

Runyon manipulates incriminating, though blurred photographs of Hanson putting on a sex show during sorority rights at college and leaks them to the press and on the Internet. How will Laine Hanson handle it? She is just a step short of leadership and the only advice she gets is either to step down or deny the allegation or handle Runyon

²² The set of public policies and initiatives designed to help eliminate past and present discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national action.

²³ Senator Ted Kennedy’s involvement in the drowning of Mary Jo Kopechne at Chappaquiddick in Massachusetts.

by mounting counter attack. Henceforth, she should not be seen with her husband because “wife behind husband is seen as support and husband behind wife is a puppeteer”. Hanson remains unfazed. She would rather withdraw than discuss personal allegations which would be beneath her dignity: ‘If it is not important for a man, it is not for me’. Here a transformational style will not work as the time is short and attitude of the people can not be changed over night. A transactional approach is planned – a lunch meeting with Runyon.

Lunch with Runyon

This is an exemplary scene with lots of lessons for ‘woman-on-way-to-leadership’ – an egalitarian style, neither reconciliatory nor confrontational, is used. When Laine arrives, instead of going straight to Runyon, she greets friends at another table, then approaches Runyon, who by now, has begun his meal yet has the audacity to look at his watch. Laine unabashedly tells him that she is delayed by only two minutes. In a bid to establish a power equation, Runyon begins to order food for her without consulting Laine but she politely declines his offer and places her own order.

Runyon: How is your boy?

Laine: No small talk Shelly.

(Shows him the dossier on herself)

Runyon: How did you get my file on you, Senator?

Laine: What do you have to say for yourself Shelly?

Runyon: You had deviant sex.

Laine: Who says it is deviant?

Runyon: I will have a big microphone before me so people will believe me.

Laine: What do you have against me, Shelly?

Runyon: I ask of you promise of greatness. Greatness emerges in times of war and calamity, for men like Kennedy or Lincoln. That you don't have.

Laine: I have served this nation, Shelly. Don't use sex as leverage. I am a woman who is not getting laid. (She walks out without waiting for the meal to finish).

Laine plays a different stroke here. She rightly decodes Runyon's stance and adopts a purely transactional approach - interrupts his social talk and demands explanation for his subterfuge. In place of war duty, what rules must exist in an organization so that women's service to the nation is appraised? Instead of arguing on 'job evaluation', she demands the right to 'basic fairness' in the confirmation process, a right guaranteed to every citizen in the country. Regarding sexual impropriety, Laine's message is clear: No trespassing in personal life.

Confirmation-Committee Hearing

Just as he had threatened, Congressman Runyon has a 'big' microphone before him in his solemn duty in American history: "we will handle it with expediency and dignity" – in principle, noble intention, in practice, he goes for the jugular.

1. *As a student at Harvard, you spoke about the separation of Church and State.*
2. *At college, you traded sexual favours with several partners. You had 'deviant sex'. Did you accept money for these favours?*
3. *Loyalty is a revered quality of the Presidency. You switched from Republican to the Democrats, and voted to impeach Clinton. Did you vote on party lines as opposed to your own beliefs?*
4. *As a woman, what is your worthiness as Commander in chief of the Armed Forces?*
5. *When your son Timothy was born, you took paid maternity leave. You are still within child bearing age. Will you take maternity leave during Vice Presidency?*
6. *You are a 'baby killer'. You aborted a child. Killing a defenseless human being can not be a matter of choice. It is the 'Holocaust of the Unborn'.*

7. *You committed adultery. You had an affair with your best friend's husband when he was your political campaigner.*

Runyon unleashes a vitriolic tidal wave with the justification that "Laine Hanson is a cancer; a cancer of liberalism; a cancer of disloyalty; a cancer of virtuous decay. Her nomination itself is a cancer of Affirmative action".

The sheer brutality of Runyon's attack is enough to scare any women from contesting for public office and the argument about what constitutes a 'job' reeks of what Joan Acker (1990) refers to as 'implicitly a gendered concept' – the organizational practices are biased for a woman. It is not a surprise that Runyon should raise these issues, what is worth learning is how Laine handles them.

Laine speaks (not respond) into the mike with a confident voice reminiscent of Joseph Welch when he accused McCarthy of 'have you no decency, Sir':

"Mr. Chairman, I have some explaining to do. Let me be clear what I stand for:

- A. Women's right to choose.*
- B. Strong armed forces but stopping the genocide on this planet*
- C. Separation of Church and State and the reason is the same as our forefather's –not to protect religion from the crass of government but to protect government from the crass of religious fanaticism. I am an atheist but I do go to church. The Church I go to emancipated the slaves, gave women the right to vote and gave us every freedom. It is the Church of Democracy.*
- D. Regarding my past, if I were a man, nobody would care how many partners I had. If it is not important for men, then it is not important for me.*
- E. Yes, I took paid maternity leave for my son. Motherhood should not be penalized. And now, my husband and I practice birth control.*

*F. Yes, I switched to Democrat party. I am loyal to my country. I voted for President Clinton's impeachment. He was 'not guilty but responsible'."*²⁴

Laine's gravitas and emotionally neutral stance double the weight of her argument. Though she is already an empowered woman yet the process of its enactment bestows a greater maturity on her. Each response is finely crafted and hard-hitting in a purely transactional style.

It is another 'small win'.

In the following scene, Laine Hanson tells Webster (a young idealistic Democrat on the Confirmation Committee, manipulated by Runyon), that if the committee wanted to seek her views (like any other male candidate) on Dow Jones, relations with Israel, or social security, she would have readily answered, but not about her 'private space'.

Webster: "Are you accusing the Committee of Sexual McCarthyism?"

Laine does not deny it and takes the analogy further by reminding him of Isaac Lamb, the first witness called before the House Un-American Activities Committee during the dark days of McCarthyism, who disclosed names, cascading the domino-fall. Had he refused, McCarthy's witch hunt would have stopped there. She hints that Webster, along with Runyon, may be playing a similar role in the second coming of McCarthy era! Laine demonstrates a 'que sera sera' attitude and counsels Webster more as a junior fellow Democrat than as an adversary. The mood is transformational and after this meeting, Webster is a 'changed man'.

Eventually, her courage and fortitude win the admiration of the President who intervenes on her behalf, checkmates her detractors by calling an emergency press conference and maneuvering Runyon into an exposure; and a fast confirmation. Later, she privately tells her story to the President about how there never was any digression in her past and all along, she had all the facts to confront Runyon, yet she stuck to her 'no comments' stance on her principles that "only mean something if you stick to them when they are inconvenient."

²⁴ Clinton was impeached for perjury. Sexual impropriety was not the issue whereas in case of Laine, it forms the main focus.

Runyon's McCarthyist tirade against Laine is certainly not subtle but at least the problem has a name and one can find a way around it. As Joan Acker (1990) states: "Women's bodies – their sexuality, their ability to procreate and their pregnancy, ... child care ... and 'mythic "emotionality"' - are suspect, stigmatized and used as grounds for control & exclusion" (p. 152). An activist's stance may not be able to manage it, given the short time. Laine's fortitude and her ability to generate trust in her President (the controller of work processes) to mobilize the same organizational machinery to work for her, win the day for her.

In this case study, Laine is already a socially and educationally empowered woman yet her transactions with Runyon during the lunch meeting and confirmation hearing, and later with Webster, are the inflexion points that complete her own empowerment. Her style is a blend of transactional leadership with flashes of transformational. Both Hathaway and Runyon are dwarfed by her stature.

India Story

As a contrast to Laine's story, it is interesting to look at the political landscape in India, a country that might have catapulted an Indira Gandhi to the high office of the Prime Minister in 1967 but where the plight of common women in politics is dismal, even to date. Despite the 33% reservation by legislation, the political and social will to back women is still lacking. Only worthless seats, rejected by men, are offered to women. Given this social reality, it is encouraging to see the direction shown by the movie *Godmother* that is based on a real life lady don, Santokhben Jadeja in Gujarat.

***Godmother* (India/Hindi/1998)**

Rambhi is an earthy woman from Gujarat's 'Mer' tribe, untouched by the enlightenment of education and unaware of egalitarian social order emerging in the rest of the world. Compared to Laine Hanson, Rambhi's life is more complex, challenging and disadvantaged yet her evolution from a mother to Godmother and finally to a leader, is a roller-coaster ride. Her native wisdom and her intuitive 'self' are her power tools.

This is the story of simple rural folks, Veeran and his wife Rambhi, driven from their arid home land in Gujarat, to nearby big town, in search of employment but falling into the abyss of the underworld. When Veeran is killed in gang rivalry, destiny pushes Rambhi into his role and thus begins the course of leadership for this vulnerable and uninitiated woman who first needs to establish her hold on her team of muscle-men. She starts with the obvious: mimicking all symbols of masculine empowerment - cigarette, car and gun (and later literacy). These symbols are important for reinforcing perception of leadership among chauvinist men. It not only works in immediacy but also somewhere along the line, the power is internalized and manifested in Rambhi's demeanor. The swift rise from a helpless widow to the most powerful woman in her community gives her another power: the power of votes in the local elections. She wins hands down because the seat is reserved for a woman candidate. It is a 'small win' yet the implication is far reaching: she gets to interact with local women and gains a larger perspective on social problems. A rural woman herself, she understands that the leader must act if the hand pumps in the locality are all defunct: "Nobody can deny the basic need of water to a community. Water is life". Next day in office, she blacklists the corrupt contractor. The community work opens her eyes to the possibility of bringing about a social change as a leader and the more she works for the community, the more efficient and confident she becomes as a person.

With each 'small win', more symbols of power arrive. Following another male practice of a court performance, a kind of 'mujra' (where a courtesan entertains men), the women drink and dance for Rambhi, celebrating the reversal of gender in leadership: the departure of male symbol of the 'king' and the advent of common woman as the new 'queen'.

As the scope of her community work expands, it brings her into direct confrontation with the party boss, Keshubhai who thinks all women are maneuverable puppets. The next milestone is a bigger election. For this, she needs to be nominated by the party bigwig, Keshubhai. Now Rambhi is on another high - the more adept she becomes at playing politics, the more gratifying and addictive it becomes personally and consequently more difficult to relinquish. At this stage, her self-knowledge is not yet complete because leadership is also desired for self-gratification.

In a scene that is almost parallel to Laine Hanson's lunch meeting with Runyon, Rambhi invites Keshubhai for tea.

Tea with Keshubhai

The meeting starts with a transactional tone as Keshubhai wants to know how much support can he expect from Rambhi during the forthcoming elections:

Rambhi: I play a clean game.

Keshubhai: I am thinking of backing your husband's brother for the party nomination. A brother is a male heir to the vote bank of his brother's community. He is sure to win.

Rambhi preempts him by indicating that if he nominates her, she would be willing to do 'anything' for him. The meaning of 'anything' is left ambiguous and Keshubhai takes it as a promise of sexual favour but as far as Rambhi is concerned, she has promised 'nothing'. Keshubhai kind of men consider demanding sexual favours from women their prerogative. Keshubhai willingly falls for this bait and nominates Rambhi.

It is a reversed Laine Hansome predicament. Rambhi handles it by keeping it ambiguous. One principle that governs behaviour in politics and has worked for her in the past, is the transactional approach of 'quid pro quo'. Tact is implicit in this game. She is aware that she is not powerful enough to confront Keshubhai on her own steam. The stakes are high; a slip now can cost her dear. She gets the party nomination and the community supports her by their votes because they begin to see her as their savior. When Keshubhai comes to seek sexual favours, she sabotages his plans by befriending his wife and inviting her to the rendezvous. It is a strategy of tact and power. Keshubhai can not harm her now. This is a 'big win'.

As a leader, she is a 'work in progress' – yet to discover the potential of her role. Her success is due to high element of social skills except that 'self-knowledge' is still incomplete. On one hand, she has a quick understanding of people and their motives and is able to work around them to 'get her work done' but on the other, she is limited in her impact because of her short-sightedness.

The Last Mile

Rambhi comes to know that her son is soliciting a girl who is in love with another man, she rises above self-interest and sides with a larger cause: that of a woman's right to choose her partner – a right denied to women of her generation. The action unleashes communal violence. A 'Mer' girl marrying a Muslim boy is a blasphemy. Rambhi understands that true leadership has to be above race, caste and gender. In a final scene, she addresses the community on true virtues of a leader where she unknowingly traces the history of feminist movement from the days of patriarchal oppression to the present times and the need for women to understand their wider potential as true humanists:

"They want to draw my Laxman-rekha.²⁵ Let them draw my limit. Sita also crossed the Laxman-rekha – not to oppose Laxman but to follow an internal discipline taught to her ... no community propagates killing, only those with vested interests do ... Today, for the first time in my life, I have done something without any self interest. I have broken the heart of my own son ... there is only one community – the humanity".

In the ensuing rage, Keshubhai's men assassinate Rambhi and the movie ends with her followers keeping vigil at her tomb, and a hand pump in the background, gushing fresh water in the arid land. Rambhi's travails transcend the parochial shackles of illiteracy, caste and gender to emerge as an inspirational leader, fondly remembered by her followers in death. It is not difficult to imagine the course her life would have taken had she lived longer.

Inference

A Carly Fiorina here (particularly during her earlier years) or an Indra Nooyi there, do not herald the spring. For the vast majority of typical women (tier-2) working in most organizations today, 'the problem without a name' manifests its protean head in myriad innocuous ways. Sometimes the women may not even recognize it because it is so subtle at the point of inception. A recent study documents that women's career may

²⁵ In *Ramayan*, Laxman draws a magical line to protect Sita, forbidding her to cross it. The villainous Ravana, disguised as a sage, tricks Sita and kidnaps her. Feminists believe that Patriarchy controls women by imposing different 'Laxman-rekhas' on them. Quoting wisdom from *Ramayan* is an age-old practice in rural communities and Rambhi's reference to it is natural.

even get affected due to boss's misconception about the family-work conflict impacting their career advancement, "... even though female employees actually reported slightly less family-work conflict than their male counterparts" (Hoobler, Wayne and Lemmon 2009) or women of marriageable/child bearing age may not get challenging projects or due mentoring like their male counterparts and it is obvious that flexi-work facility for women, touted as a big favour by organizations, is a survival kit for retaining a job, not for career promotion. These and many other similar corporate instances abound in different shades of McCarthyism except that they are seldom proved. Empirical research methods are not likely to yield meaningful projections as most women are not likely to divulge individual strategies on how they handled a tricky situation. That is why art forms become a natural correlative for deriving meaning except that inferences about behaviour are tentative and directional as they are not backed by empirical data.

- Both transactional and transformational leadership styles have their appropriateness and topicality, their employment being a function of who one is dealing with and not who one is. Transformational style in reality, as seen in organizations, is a slow process, extended over time. The style can not be used intentionally and by design – it is manifested and measured as an outcome in the evolution and growth in the follower and the self-empowerment of the leader. Desirable, as it may sound, transformational leadership style is rare in occurrence in the initial career of a manager – most job requirements need transactional style. At some point in academic discourse, there is a perception that transformational leadership is superior to transactional leadership – semantically, one promises a change, the other just transaction. If we look at the implication of this thought for leadership directions for women, to expect that women need to exhibit ideal leadership behaviour inclined more towards a transformational style, is to give them unrealistic targets and check their growth. A sequential and not a concurrent employment of more transactional style for 'navigating the path to leadership' followed by more transformational style when leadership position has been achieved seems to emerge from these two case studies and from general observation.
- In both case studies, the protagonists do not need to be 'petty' to get to power. In public administration, there is a popular term referred to as 'Hikmatvali'²⁶ –

²⁶ Hikmatvali – 'Beyond the horizon' solutions to tricky problems using a judicious mixture of tact and power. Recorded in the annals of public administration during British times. Mentioned by Phillip Mason, ICS, based on his experiences in administration in India, in his book, 'The Men who Ruled India'.

a Persian word that means use of a judicious mixture of tact & force for ‘getting things done’. It is part of working documents for administrators in public administration. The term applies to both Laine and Rambhi, particularly latter’s handling of Keshubhai and can be used by all future aspirants.

- Both the case studies demonstrate that women are quick learners. Their empowerment has a faster multiplier effect on the overall advancement of the organization and therefore, in favour of the business growth. Goldman Sachs study 2007 validates that firms that employ more women achieve greater growth.
- The way forward for women is to be less parochial today in their pursuit, include men, build more coalitions to achieve results both in immediacy and in the long run and refrain from over-selling or being over defensive about feminist agenda (Kristo & WuDunn 2009).

Till such time that women have not found a level playing field, transactional style of leadership would play a more important role in breaking through the glass ceiling, or ‘navigating the path to power’, as these case studies suggest. And transformational leadership would have to be saved for a time when a true opportunity to ‘exercise power’ manifests itself.

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Power and Gender in UK Defence

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It is a universal principle of social justice that men and women should enjoy equal rights on fundamental issues. This is codified in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, Articles 1 and 2, and is supported by the UN Gender Mainstreaming policy. The 1976 EU Council Directive 76/207/EEC demands that member states follow the principle of equality of treatment in the workplace and it prohibits discrimination for reasons of gender. Furthermore, in the UK, the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 also prohibits discrimination on the grounds of gender.

National defence is a fundamental issue, indeed the UK National Security Strategy (CM7590) states it as the highest duty of government. It necessarily follows then that women should enjoy equal rights regarding national defence. However, when we examine the current policy for employment of women in the UK Armed Forces, significant inequality is evident. So, the research question posed in this paper is: can the current UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) policy be justified?

Research approach and broad findings

The research approach focuses on the officer cadre because of the hierarchical nature of the military. The paper firstly identifies UK Government policy on the employment of women in the Armed Forces. In brief, policy is that women are excluded from close combat roles on the grounds of their inferior physical capability. The paper then presents a literature review on the feminisation of the military and also examines emerging research on women's leadership styles drawing on the 'new leadership' paradigm of transformational and transactional leadership.

Empirical data on the number of men and women officers employed, and their rank based on the generic NATO rank structure is introduced with an experimental model that uses the typical size of an Army command group at each rank, as a proxy for authority. Using this model, the extent of authority that women exercise is assessed; the results indicate that women exercise significantly less authority than is proportionate to their numbers. This is because although they form a significant percentage of the officer cadre (12%), the number of women reduces through the rank structure to almost zero at senior levels, where most authority is concentrated. The paper concludes that women are not equal partners in the UK Armed Forces and the current policy is not defensible. An affirmative research programme is recommended.

Women in the UK military

Current policy on the deployment of women is defined in the MOD report *Women in the Armed Forces* (MOD 2002) but, in brief, the position for each Armed Force is as follows:

Army; women are excluded from close combat roles in the Infantry, Household Cavalry and Royal Armoured Corps. The latter two operate heavy armoured vehicles. My research (Dunn 2007, 2008) indicates some acceptance from women officers interviewed that the physical demands of the Infantry limit the capability of women to meet the standards. There was less acceptance of the rationale for excluding women from the Household Cavalry and Royal Armoured Corps where the physical demands are less. Women officers are however employed as pilots in the Army Air Corps (AAC), now designated as part of the combat arms.

Royal Air Force; women cannot be employed in close combat roles in the RAF Regiment. However, female air-crews were introduced in 1989 and women officers now fly fast jets.

Naval Services; women cannot be employed in close combat roles in the Royal Marines General Service. In addition women are not employed in the Royal Navy on submarines or as mine clearance divers. The general exclusion of women from going to sea was reversed in 1990.

The resultant proportion of jobs open to women is:

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| Army | 71% |
| Naval Service | 71% |
| Royal Air Force | 96% |

Table 1 – Percentage of military posts open to women in the UK Armed Forces -source www.mod.uk (1)

MOD is allowed to derogate from the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 under an ECJ ruling C-273/97 which allowed exclusion on the grounds of operational effectiveness. MOD argued successfully that women lack the physical capability to undertake close combat roles. European Community Law demands a review on any exclusions every eight years and a MOD policy review on close combat roles is due to be published in 2010.

There have been significant developments on the employment of women in the Armed Forces. Up to 1990, women were forced to leave on pregnancy whether married or not, and were confined mainly to administrative work in, for example the Women's Royal Army Corp (WRAC). MOD's current approach is detailed in this statement.

Women hold key positions in the Armed Forces and are now reaching senior ranks, such as Brigadier in the Army, Air Commodore in the RAF and Captain in the Royal Navy. The attainment of 2 Star rank (Rear Admiral, Major General or Air Vice-Marshal) and above has tended to depend on operational experience in the Combat Arms and at present there are no women in these ranks. However, as women are increasingly deploying on operations they may attain these higher ranks with time. Continuing difficulties in reconciling family (especially child and elder care), Service commitments to go to sea or deployment overseas remain obstacles to career advancement for many women. Significant efforts are however being made to introduce more "family friendly" policies to aid the retention of female personnel. (www.mod.uk (2))

Thomson (2004:9) identifies that the length of service from appointment to leaving the Armed Forces, also termed the Return of Service (ROS), was for female officers and soldiers far less than for men. Female ROS was only 58.8% of male length of service. She identified that difficulty around childcare was a significant factor in making the decision to leave. Carreiras (2006:55-59) discusses in some depth the challenges for women of 'combining work and the family in late modernity'. She also highlights the issue of military men and women who are partners or married and the subsequent issues of postings and arranging childcare which will have the consequence that: 'one of the careers will be damaged'.

Dandeker (2000) suggests that four factors have led to the integration of women in the Armed Forces. The first is driven by societal pressures such as demographic change but also normative and legal pressures, in particular human rights and sex discrimination related legislation. A second factor has been internal with the organisation having to respond to pressures for better career opportunities from women already in service. He states (op cit:41) "It is widely recognised in the services that women have been relatively under utilised given their general high quality". Thirdly, technological changes in the Armed Forces have led to a relative decline in the emphasis on physical prowess and aggressiveness as factors essential to military performance, although he acknowledges that the extent of this trend is contentious. Finally he identifies that policy makers, faced with societal pressures that do not recognise the uniqueness of the military enterprise and require that they come under the same principles of equal opportunity evident in non military employment, are far less sympathetic to making the military a special case.

Feminisation of the military

There is a deep and broadening body of research and literature on women in the military and this section makes no claim to be comprehensive. What follows is a limited cross section of experience and viewpoints.

The US military's policy is broadly similar to the UK, but there is an underswell of discontent as indicated by the title of Steihm's (1996) edited work *It's our military too! Women and the US military*. The Canadian Armed Forces have opened all posts to

women; they lost a combat arms officer, Captain Nichola Goddard, in 2006 in Afghanistan. The Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) have few women promoted beyond the (army equivalent) rank of Captain. Walsh (2007) argues that this limits SAF's capability to field talent and that current restrictions should be lifted. In Germany, resulting from European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruling in 2000, the Bundeswehr has opened all roles to women. In Sweden, all posts are open to women, whereas in Finland, which operates a conscription system (Tallberg 2009) employment of women is very restricted.

The phenomenon of feminisation of the military can be divided into three distinct but related strands: sociological, emotive, and pragmatic.

Sociological

At a global level, the UN has adopted a policy termed *gender mainstreaming*. Mainstreaming involves “ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities – policy development, research, advocacy/dialogue, legislation resource allocation and planning implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects” (www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi). This is promoted by Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI).

Of particular relevance is Resolution 1325 of October 2000 where the UN Security Council expressed its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations and urged that a gender component be established in peace missions. The rationale for this initiative is an increasing understanding of the disproportionate impact that armed conflict has on women and girls. UN Report (2004) S/2004/8/14 *Women Peace and Security* provided an update on the resolution. It identified (ibid:78) the ‘special vulnerability of displaced women, the needs of women heads of household in times of war, the role of women in conflict resolution; it also identified (ibid:73) the “escalation in scope and intensity of sexual and gender-based violence as one of the most visible and insidious impacts of armed conflict on women and girls”. Set against this is the fact that women are excluded as actors in early warning, reconciliation peace building or post conflict reconstruction. The report commented that increasing

women's representation in decision-making, and expanding the roles and contributions of women in peace and security issues was a major element of resolution 1325.

Goldstein (2001) reviews the issue of the historical record of women as combatants. He examines the biological evidence to link warrior qualities with gender. He finds no such link. He then examines sociological explanations of gender roles and finds some explanation for the puzzle. War is constructed as a test or signifier of masculinity. Victory is confirmation of male identity and defeat is emasculation. Femininity is constructed to reinforce man as warrior both in support roles as nurse mother or wife and in opposition as peace activist.

Frost (2002:43) states that 'young men have always been attracted by the martial ethos and the opportunity to prove themselves in battle'. He posits that the process of exclusivity or 'male bonding' provides the cohesion on which any fighting unit depends. Kennedy-Pipe and Welch (2002:51) comment that 'war was, and many would argue, still is, associated with masculine values such as physical strength, honour and courage'. However, using the lens of liberal feminism, they argue that the military has been a 'bastion of political patriarchy and that the military retains key significance because of its prolonged resistance to efforts to equalise access. Steans (1998) suggests that, for the male soldier, his heroic role of protecting the nation's womanhood provides a significant motive for participation in military conflict. This carries the implication that the family and its female custodians are vulnerable and require male protection.

Sitting over this is the cultural issue of whether women are truly accepted in the Armed Forces. MOD in the face of extensive evidence of sexual harassment in the Armed Forces agreed with Equality and Human Rights Commission (previously Equal Opportunities Commission) in 2005 to conduct a regular survey and to take positive action to change the culture. Recent surveys (MOD 2006 and 2009a) continue to find extensive evidence of women in the Armed Forces having faced some form of sexual harassment. The 2009 report said that 78% of the servicewomen surveyed had been exposed to comments about their appearance, body or sexual activities. Although there was a high tolerance for these behaviours, 48% of the respondents sometimes found them offensive (MOD 2009a Table 17 Q8).

Emotive

The idea of a woman killing in combat raises strong emotions. However, the issue seems to be one of context, not principle. Women fly attack helicopters in the Army Air Corps, fighter jets in the RAF, and direct lethal fire in the Royal Artillery. Women also captain war fighting vessels. Rather, it is the concept of a woman fighting and killing the enemy in close combat that appears to be a cultural taboo (Evans 2009) by Western moral values.

Van Creveld (2002) is quite clear that during armed conflicts, women should stay at home. The consequence of women participating in warfare is that men become emasculated and that women who make pathetic soldiers anyway lose their femininity. He reviews the performance of women fighters over history in guerrilla campaigns such as Phillipines, Sierra Leone, Chechyna and Stalingrad and concludes: 'In not one of these wars do women participate any more than they have always done; that is to say hardly at all'. He links the current rise in the number of Western women in uniform to the emergence of nuclear weapons; the less a state believes it will have to fight a meaningful conflict the more women it accepts into the Armed Forces. This has the effect of diminishing the attractiveness of the profession to men who find it the perfect vehicle to express their masculinity. He concludes that should a real threat emerge "the expanded role of women in the military will vanish like the chimera it is".

Mitchell (1998), a US commentator, has a similar negative approach stating that women are only in the military because of institutional pressures. He claims that performance standards for recruits and training programmes have had to be lowered to accommodate women, with a subsequent negative impact on morale. Herbert, in a US context, says that '[...] women were also likely to be perceived as weak. It often seems that in the military all women are perceived to be weak until proven otherwise' (1998: 67). The key issue with this strand is whether public opinion is prepared for women soldiers to engage in direct physical combat. There is conflicting evidence for this from contemporary conflicts.

Pragmatic

National government has to maintain manning levels for its Armed Forces as part of its national security strategy. There have been significant recruitment shortfalls over recent years although the current economic climate is changing this short term.

Experience is also accumulating of women actually being involved in operational conflicts simply by virtue of the nature of modern warfare, and conducting themselves in a highly professional manner as evidenced previously. Dixon also makes this important point, even more relevant today:

In days gone by, when physical strength counted for more on the battlefield than mental ability, and senior commanders could exercise their heroic powers by leading their troops into action, the physical aspects of heroic leadership were no doubt important. But in modern war [...] heroic leadership must count for rather less than managerial and technical ability. (1976:213)

Field and Nagl (2001) comment how ‘much of the current debate surrounding the presence of women in the positions in which they now serve is extremist and destructive’. They state that the specialities that in effect are now closed to women eg infantry and armour are ‘traditionally the most critical routes to high command positions. In addition they are culturally and functionally considered to be positions of greatest significance to the defence mission.’ They also claim that there is little appetite amongst women for these combat roles. However, they conclude that ‘changes in the international environment have moved the balance point between individual liberty and the military’s functional imperative. The time has come to permit female officers to serve in the combat arms if they are able to meet the physical requirements of that branch. Anything less is a betrayal of the very democratic principles which members of the American military have sworn to support and defend’.

The defence environment has changed significantly as the Cold War threat has reduced (MOD 1998, 2003). The combat zone can also encompass traditional support activities, such as logistics, in a fast moving conflict. Smith and General (2005) describe conflict as now being conducted ‘amongst the people’. Walters (2004) comments that “Even though US military women are not officially allowed into combat, they are finding themselves in the thick of the action with no definable front line – and they are fighting and dying in record numbers”. The recent account by Kayla Williams (2005) who was a sergeant in the military intelligence division of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) highlights the tough role of women in the military working alongside, but not part of, the infantry and the commonality of experience;

When you get deployed your whole life everything is intimately bound up with the people on your team. These are the people with whom you live, sleep, work, eat, fight. (p. 58)

Leadership research has also focused on the gender debate with particular attention to 'new paradigm thinking' on transactional and transformational leadership (Bass 1998). Transactional leadership operates on the basis of exchange theory where the leader does something in exchange for an act of equal value from the follower. Transformational leadership appeals to the moral values of the followers and engages them at a higher level that transcends exchange. This is through factors of idealised influence, personalised consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation. Furthermore, Eagly and Carli (2003) using a meta analysis of research on gender and leadership, identified evidence that female leaders were typically more transformational in their leadership style.

Employment of female and male officers in the UK armed forces

The MOD's Defence Agency for Statistical Analysis (DASA) publishes regular information on areas such as manpower and finance. Table 2 based on MOD (2009) statistics shows the position of women in the whole of the Armed Forces terms of NATO rank structure.

The headline figure that women account for 12% of the total and men for 88% is not surprising. An equally important issue is that women constitute a decreasing proportion of the officer population until, at the top level, they represent less than 1%. This is less than industry where one in seven Directors (14.4%) is female (EOC 2006); this in itself is far from satisfactory.

For complex reasons, women in the Armed Forces have not been promoted beyond 1*, the equivalent of Brigadier, and then not into a command position. A consequence is that no contemporary role models of women military leaders exist in the same way as for men. Military leaders such as Field Marshals Slim, Wavell and Montgomery still figure on Staff Course programmes, alongside heroic figures such as Shackleton. Terry (1996) in discussing the lack of role models for women says: 'For the woman it can be extremely difficult to follow a male role model because the attributes he exhibits may be

inappropriate or ineffective for the woman leader. This lack of senior women leader role models makes leader development for women more complex than for men’.

| Officer (OF) Grade Group | Equivalent Army Rank | Female | % of total | Male | % of total | Total |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| 6-9 | 1* and above | 4 | 0.8 | 507 | 99.2 | 511 |
| 5 | Col | 41 | 3.3 | 1179 | 96.7 | 1220 |
| 4 | Lt Col | 216 | 5.3 | 3844 | 94.7 | 4060 |
| 3 | Major | 990 | 10.4 | 8550 | 89.6 | 9540 |
| 2 | Captain | 1790 | 15.2 | 9980 | 84.8 | 11770 |
| 1-D | Below Captain | 790 | 17.2 | 3810 | 82.8 | 4600 |
| Totals | | 3831 | 12.1 | 27870 | 87.9 | 31701 |

Table 2 - Distribution of male and female officers in the UK Armed Services - Source MOD DASA TSP 09 Table 1 01.04.09

Women are therefore set a double challenge in career progression. The first is to cope with being such a small minority in a traditionally masculine environment. The second is the complex issue of how women can be authentic in such a masculine environment. Herbert (op cit) talks about the stress that women suffer in trying to arrive at a middle position between appearing too feminine or too masculine. If a woman is too feminine, this may lead to accusations of not being soldier-like and using her sexuality to secure favours. On the other hand an overtly masculine approach eg swearing or drinking heavily may lack authenticity. Interestingly, she comments that the range of sanctions applied when women were perceived to be too ‘feminine’ included being ostracised or disapproved of by other women (ibid: 65). Sheppard, in an earlier study of Canadian women managers, identified a similar issue. She describes how women had responded by developing a ‘blending’ strategy:

The blending depends on a very careful management of being ‘feminine’ enough (ie in terms of appearance, self presentation etc) so that conventional rules and

expectations of gender behaviour can be maintained by the men in the situation while simultaneously being 'business like enough' (ie rational, competent, instrumental' impersonal – in other words stereotypically masculine) so that the issues of gender and sexuality are apparently minimised in the workplace. (Sheppard 1989: 146)

Authority Distribution Model – an experiment

The headline figure in Table 2 is that only 12% of the officer cadre is female, itself a low figure. However I will analyse the figures to identify the impact on authority of the distribution of female officers using an experimental model. We have identified that the military is a hierarchical organisation with authority flowing from the top. It would also follow that officers at the base of the organisation exercise less authority than those at the apex. But by how much? My hypothesis is that the typical head count in the Army commanded by each rank is a possible proxy for authority exercised. It is not a precise measure because organisational models differ across the services and, within each service as we have seen, some career paths are privileged over others.

Using the NATO rank structure in Table 2, OF 1 – D (or 2nd Lieutenant) would command a platoon or troop of 30 soldiers. OF 2 (captain) is 2 i/c to an OF 3 (Major) so I have bracketed them together. A Major commands a company or battery of 100 men. An OF 4 (Lt Colonel) commands a battalion or regiment of 500 soldiers. An OF 5 (Colonel) is a Staff, or non command, position, so I have bracketed them with OF 4s. An OF 6 (Brigadier) commands a brigade of 2000 – 3000 troops whilst an OF 7 (Major General) commands a division of 10,000 soldiers. I have bracketed OF 6-9 together and taken a mean of 4500 soldiers commanded. Having established a base line using the OF 1 – D rank, the impact factors can be calculated as shown in Table 3. The result provides for most authority to be vested in the OF6-9 group, which would be expected.

| Col 1 Rank (see Table 2) | Col 2 Soldiers commanded | Col 3 Impact Factor (rounded) | % of impact Col 3/total col 3 | Comment |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| OF 1 - D | 30 | 1 | .5 | Base Factor |
| OF 2 | 100 | 3 | 1.5 | Soldiers commanded/Soldiers commanded by OF 1 - D |
| OF 3 | 100 | 3 | 1.5 | As above |
| OF4 | 500 | 17 | 9 | As above |
| OF 5 | 500 | 17 | 9 | As above |
| OF 6-9 | 4500 | 150 | 78.5 | As above |
| Total | | 191 | 100 | |

Table 3 – Calculation of Impact factors based on number of soldiers commanded

The impact factors can now be applied to the female/male distribution amongst the officers shown in Table 2. The result is given below in Table 4.

| OF Grade Group | Impact Factor | Total officers | Total Authority | % of females | Total Female Authority | % of males | Total Male Authority |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| 6-9 | 150 | 511 | 76550 | 0.8 | 613 | 99.2 | 76037 |
| 5 | 17 | 1220 | 20740 | 3.3 | 684 | 96.7 | 20056 |
| 4 | 17 | 4060 | 69020 | 5.3 | 3658 | 94.7 | 65362 |
| 3 | 3 | 9540 | 28620 | 10.4 | 2976 | 89.6 | 25644 |
| 2 | 3 | 11770 | 35310 | 15.2 | 5367 | 84.8 | 29943 |
| 1-D | 1 | 4600 | 4600 | 17.2 | 791 | 82.8 | 3809 |
| Totals | | 31701 | 234940 | 12.1 | 14090 | 87.9 | 220850 |
| % authority held by females = | | | 14090 | divided by | 234940 | = | 6.0 |
| % authority held by males = | | | 220850 | divided by | 234940 | = | 94.0 |

Table 4 - Calculation of relative authority exercised by male and female officers following application of impact factors

It can be seen from this model that although women account for 12% of the headcount, their impact in terms of the authority they exercise, is reduced to 6%. Kanter (1993) examines the issue of a small number of a particular group e.g. women, in a (male dominated) environment. Where very small numbers are present, she argues this leads to the concept of tokenism where tokens are members of a sub group that is less than 15%. Tokens encounter a number of problems, e.g. their high visibility leads to performance pressures, or their physical appearance takes on a higher importance than their work performance. She defines a balanced group, i.e. where such issues do not present themselves, as a ratio of between 60:40 to 50:50.

Discussion

The relationship of the UK Armed Forces with its female officer cadre is complex. The organisation is experiencing significant change in the nature of its task which now constitutes a broad spectrum of activity and an environment where conflict, and the nature of its resolution, is less predictable than in the Cold War era. The traditional physical attributes required for successful operations, although still very important, have now been blended with a requirement for be more empathetic and to have more context sensitive appreciation of operations, as demonstrated by US counter-insurgency doctrine. This chimes well with the 'new paradigm' leadership models.

At the same time however, it has a blanket policy that excludes women from close combat arms, primarily on physical capability grounds. There are critical consequences to this policy in that the input of women is potentially denied on other important military tasks involving the combat arms eg peacekeeping and humanitarian scenarios. These are areas of higher activity where the presence of women soldiers would provide a means of dialogue and positive role models for the women victims of such events.

The exclusion of women from close combat roles also relegates them careerwise to a lower caste than male officers, thus creating an 'armoured glass' ceiling (Dunn 2007). As Kennedy-Pipe and Welch (ibid:51) comment: 'women's partial exclusion from the military and in particular from combat roles is held to exclude them from an important sphere of value and thus to derogate them'. The irony is that there is emerging evidence that women are more pre-disposed to a transformational leadership style, and their

input has helped inform the new, and allegedly successful, US counter insurgency doctrine. This supports the UN Gender Mainstreaming policy.

The headline figure that women represent 12% of the officer cadre needs to be interpreted in the context of their distribution through the rank structure. So we are left with a paradox that the task of defence now conducted by the UK Armed Forces is almost completely a male operation. Women exercise little authority, and are reduced to 'tokens' in Kanter's (ibid) terms, even though they should be equal partners in the project and there is some evidence that they enjoy better skills than men to deal with contemporary conflicts. The situation is brought about by two systemic inhibitors. The first is their career paths in mainly support functions, which has the effect of limiting their career paths under current policy. The second is the absence of effective childcare support systems; this is a major contributory factor to a shorter career timeline and a resultant foreshortened career path.

The current UK MOD policy review should address these systemic issues. Further, affirmative based research (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom 2003) is required to:

- establish the view points of key stakeholders in this debate, principally serving women possibly through use of an ethnographic approach.
- to examine objectively the practicality of opening all posts to women, drawing on the experiences of other forces such as Canada and Sweden
- to identify the barriers to a more extended Return of Service by women and the actions needed to overcome them

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Gender on Corporate Boards: A discourse analysis of a debate of gender quotas on an internet discussion site

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Introduction

Women's representation on the executive suites and boards of large corporations remains low, in spite of versatile efforts to foster opportunities for women to ascend the corporate career ladders. At the European Union level, the share of women on the boards of the biggest publicly listed companies was only 11 percent in 2007 (Report on equality..., 2009). Norway, a non-EU Nordic country, makes an exception with an imperative gender quota law passed in 2003. It enacts a 40 percent quota for women and men on the boards of publicly listed private sector companies. Following Norway's example, gender quotas have been proposed as a solution to the existing gender bias on corporate boards also in the rest of the Nordic countries.

This paper focuses on the gender quota debate in Finland. The aim is to examine how gender imbalance is discursively constructed in the media during a fierce public debate on gender quotas. This debate took place as a result of Norway's legislation and a subsequent proposal by one of the Ministers that gender quotas on corporate boards might be needed in Finland. Our empirical data consist of opinion texts on the internet site of the leading Finnish newspaper. In our analysis, we use the methods of rhetorical discourse analysis to identify the position the writers take in the debate, the rhetorical means and resources they use as well as the themes framing the quota debate.

Finland provides an interesting setting for analyzing gender equality issues. Along with other Nordic countries, Finland enjoys the reputation of a Nordic welfare state and high gender equality (HDR 2006; Hausmann, Tyson & Zahidi 2008). The ideal of gender equality is strongly rooted in the Finnish mentality. Since the Second World War, women have worked primarily in full-time employment. Today, Finnish women have the opportunity choose both family and career due to public childcare services available to all for a nominal fee. As a result, Finnish women's employment rate is among the

highest in the EU (Report on equality... 2009). In addition to the egalitarian labour force participation, gender equality is high in politics and legislation (Naiset ja miehet Suomessa, 2007).

Although women's participation in employment is relatively equal, they are not equally represented in the decision-making positions. For example, the share of women managers is below the EU average (Report on Equality..., 2009), and it has not progressed significantly since the early 1990s (Vanhala 2003). In 2006, the share of women board members in the biggest publicly listed companies in Finland was 16 percent. Considering the slow increase in the share of women in top positions and women's higher educational level in all age cohorts under retirement age, it is no wonder that public debate on gender quotas has surfaced on many occasions (Pesonen, Tienari & Vanhala 2009; Tienari, Meriläinen & Lang 2004; Vanhala 2006).

Women on corporate boards

Men dominate all levels of managerial and decision-making hierarchy, particularly in the highest managerial ranks, top management teams and corporate boards. The glass ceiling preventing competent women to advance to top management has been identified especially in larger male dominated companies (Vanhala 2003; Hausman et al. 2008). Only a few women enter the executive suite and corporate board and, except for Norway, the progress has been very slow. The attempt to explain this has identified reasons at individual, company, and the social, political and economic spheres. (Burgess & Tharenou 2002; Hillman, Shropshire & Cannella 2007; Terjesen & Singh 2008). Bilimoria and Wheeler (2000), in their literature review on women on corporate boards, identify two streams of research: one related to the representation of women on boards, and the other to the status of women directors. The former type of research has focused on the presence and expertise of women corporate directors; the latter research covers, e.g., women director's identity and role, tokenism, and sex-biased attitudes towards women on corporate boards.

The recent literature on the role of gender on boards has focused on women's contributions to board work through an increased diversity of expertise, opinions and actions, and their impact to company performance. There is some evidence that diverse boards might be more effective than homogenous boards (Van der Walt, Ingley,

Shergill & Townsend 2006). Positive relationships have also been found between the proportion of women or minorities on the board and firm performance (Carter, Simkins & Simpson 2003; Kotiranta, Kovalainen & Rouvinen 2007). Generally speaking, the academic and practice-level debate on women on corporate boards has emphasized advantages of having women on boards. A diverse board composition is not only a question of equality; it also profits the business and its owners.

In spite of the positive impact of women on corporate board dynamics emphasized in prior literature – including the improvement of company image in signalling the company's commitment to the principles of equality – the increase in the number of women on boards has been marginal.

Gender quota debate in the Finnish media

There have been two big public debates on gender quotas in Finland. The first debate was spurred by the amendment of the Equality Law in 1995 whereas the second was a reaction to the ministerial level public speculation on the need to enact gender quotas in private companies similar to Norway. The amendment of the Equality Law in 1995 included a recommendation that “any public body, board or council have at least 40 percent of each gender represented” (Laki naisten ja...). The debate following the law was not particularly heated. The analyses of media texts and the argument used in this debate identified discourses such as: ‘quotas as a threat for equality,’ ‘the lack of expertise,’ ‘competence’, and ‘the controversial expectations about good womanhood and masculine professionalism as a double standard imposed to women’ (Pohjola 1997; Tienari et al. 2004).

The second gender quota debate in the Finnish media was influenced by Norway's decision, as the first country, to pass a law of a 40 percent gender quota on the boards of private sector companies in 2003. New corporations had to fulfil the requirement as of 1 January 2006 and the existing ones two years later. By the (first) deadline, more than 80% of listed companies had complied with the legislation. Today, the share of women on boards is over 40 percent. (Kilday, Mihahailescu, Nolan & Schreve 2009)

Norway's case raised an intense debate about gender quotas on boards of publicly listed companies in Finland in 2006. Inspired by the Norwegian model, the Minister of Social Affairs and Health, Tuula Haatainen, who also acted as the Minister of Equality,

published a column in the leading daily newspaper Helsingin Sanomat (HS) on March 5, just before the International Women's Day in 2006. In this column, she proposed that gender quotas on corporate boards might be worth trying in Finland, too. This raised the first wave of comments and writings. The second wave started when Minister Haatainen and Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen wrote a letter to the top management of publicly listed companies and economic leaders. In July 12, 2006 Minister Haatainen returned to the subject of gender quotas in *Demari* (a social democratic newspaper) by stating, e.g., "The Norwegian model is extremely interesting, and we must consider if it were necessary to apply it also in Finland. Of course, I would hope that things would proceed without any rigid regulations and laws. However, if nothing happens, this kind of measures may be needed." This raised the third wave of opinion texts and writings.

Methodology

The particular genre of media texts we chose for the analysis on gender quotas are opinion texts published on the internet site of Helsingin Sanomat, the leading Finnish daily newspaper, covering three periods. Our data on the first wave of the debate, starting from Minister Haatainen's first column, consists of 76 opinion texts between March 5 and April 3, 2006. The data on the second wave, after Minister Haatainen's and Prime Minister Vanhanen's letter to the top managers, consists of 55 opinion texts on the internet site between June 8 and June 13, 2006. The data on the third wave, starting from Minister Haatainen's newspaper column, resulted in 116 opinion texts published between July 12 and July 28, 2006. The data cover altogether 247 texts.

In the analysis of the opinion texts, we draw on rhetorical discourse analysis. We pay special attention to the way gender quotas are discussed, how the claims and comments are argued for, and how credibility is produced. As a result of our analysis, we will first define the argumentation positions (Billing 1987, 1991) related to gender quotas. These are positions the writers use to make claims and defend themselves.

Emphasizing the analysis of the variety of language, we will use as a conceptual tool interpretation repertoires (or repertoire), instead of discourse. The repertoire is a discursive unit that is homogenous in vocabulary and constructed around key concepts and metaphors and used to describe or evaluate things, events and action (Potter & Wetherell 1987). The repertoires function as resources of language and as socially

shared interpretation methods (Potter 1996). By interpretation repertoire, we mean a relatively solid use of language, which forms its own meaning system and the linguistic resources in storytelling. Because our research interest focuses on how the texts try to convince the reader, we will pay attention to the repertoires related to gender quotas. We are not interested in individual writers or their motives.

Another analytical tool we apply in this paper is frames. They are rhetorical resources that offer different rhetorical ingredients to the user. By applying different frames, it is possible to produce alternative versions from the events under study and to subordinate them to the use of one's current purposes.

Our first research question focuses on what kind of argumentation positions the writers of the discussion site are taking in relation to gender quotas. The argumentation position refers to writer's opinions, beliefs and attitudes, which may be controversial and related to a certain situation in public debate (Billig 1991). Our second research question is: what kind of rhetorical repertoires are the writers using to defend and legitimize their argumentation positions?

Rhetorics of the gender quota debate

In this section, we illustrate our empirical data, the opinion texts published on the internet site of Helsingin Sanomat, through a thematic framework based on repertoires identified in the texts. The majority of the opinion texts took a critical stance to quotas. We identified three critical repertoires: the repertoires of personal experiences, ridiculous quotas, and economic facts. In the texts defending quotas, only a repertoire appealing to diversity could be identified. In addition to these four repertoires, we identified two frames, 'equality' and 'competence', used both in the critical and the supportive texts.

The repertoire of personal experiences

In this category, writers draw from their own experiences and perceptions when criticizing quotas. The rhetorical power comes from simple conclusions in which the writer generalizes her/his personal experience to concern the wider context. The vivid real-life touch of the text appeals to readers who can easily identify her/himself with

the writer. The credibility of the argument can be strengthened by the source of experiences, e.g., from a male dominated and traditional field, from a long working history in a company, or an appreciated educational background.

Extract 1. (Perfect woman 11.3.2006)

(...) I have a licentiate degree in economics, and I have a very well paid position which I have achieved with hard work and by my own merits, only. During the thirty years that I've been in the working life I have unfortunately seen quite a few women with basic or college education to advance to superior positions by sleeping with the boss. They all share the one competence that Haatainen is looking for: the correct sex. In my opinion, quotas for women don't differ much from that kind of career advancement.

In the extract above, the 'perfect woman' uses her own long experience to support her critical position towards quotas. The writer claims that she has witnessed several women proceeding in their career by having sex with their superiors. The exact number of these cases is not explicated; however, the writer is trying to convince readers that the phenomenon in question is not rare. In the extract, Minister Haatainen's quota proposal is seen equivalent with 'proceeding in career by having sex with superiors' connected by the criteria of being a female. With this strategy, the writer appeals to the ethics of a reader: getting a promotion by having sex with one's boss is not acceptable. In this way, the reader is led to make a similar conclusion about quotas. Drawing on one's own personal experiences is effective, because it is difficult for others to subvert it as they do not have access to others' (inner) world.

The repertoire of ridiculous quotas

Within 'the repertoire of ridiculous quotas', gender quotas are resisted by using irony and sarcasm; the quotas are made to look ridiculous, unrealistic and impossible. The aim of this repertoire is to suppress the discussion on quotas as unnecessary and irrelevant. According to Potter (1996), irony may be constructed around the argument or the person presenting the argument. The participants of this internet discussion

used irony as a weapon when attacking both the issue and the concept of quota, and the persons that support them. The attacks are mainly targeted towards minister Haatainen and social democrats. Feminists are also classified as ‘enemies’. Sarcasm, one type irony, is used in the following extract:

Extract 2. (Oberleutnant 12.7.2006)

Congratulations to the minister of equality for increasing inequality. Until now the selection has been done between the educated and uneducated, fools and intelligent. Now we must look into trousers and under skirts. Is it worth changing sex for an unemployed man(...)

The utterance “Congratulations to the minister of equality for increasing inequality” is sarcasm in its purest form. Sarcasm, almost an insult in this case, is targeted directly towards the minister. Typically, the actual meaning of the sentence is opposite to the stated meaning.

The goal of the repertoire of ridiculous quotas is to show the irrelevance of quotas. Sarcastic language, cutting jokes and other ways of making fool of the person or argument are effective in silencing the opponent. This raises the question if it was due to these sarcastic texts that there were so few supporters of quotas in the HS discussion board.

The repertoire of economic facts

The repertoire of economic facts was the most widely used by writers in the critical position. Quotas are resisted by appealing to the freedom and autonomy of the markets: owners of private enterprises have the right to choose the board members they wish. This repertoire highlights the responsibilities that listed companies have towards their owners, on the one hand, and, towards the well-being of the whole Finnish society, on the other.

The repertoire of economic facts draws on ‘objective facts’ outside the writer, while the repertoire of personal experiences focuses on writers’ own perceptions. The more factual the text appears, the more indisputable it seems to readers (Potter, 1996).

Within this repertoire, quotas are constructed simply as impossible, and not even worth discussing about. It is typical to hide the person of the writer: the facts speak for themselves.

Extract 3. (Corporate G 13.7.2006)

Owners with their voting right in limited companies have the right to choose the people they wish to the most important body of the company, the board. The market for chief executives is limited in Finland. Even at the present, the so-called market for corporate governance doesn't function as efficiently as it should. That is why there are members on boards of Finnish companies, who wouldn't get there in efficient markets for corporate governance. The proposed gender quotas restrict owners' basic rights given in the company law and (...)

Another way of increasing the impression of factuality is to use numbers and quantifying words. Exact numbers, in particular, increase the factuality of knowledge, but more precise verbal quantifying may serve to support argumentation as well, as illustrated in the following quote: "... Nothing prevents share-owners from choosing a completely female dominated board ..."

The repertoire of diversity for the support of quotas

The repertoire of diversity is based on the idea that the introduction of quotas would bring positive progress to a stagnant and one-sided nature of board work. Diversity is thus paralleled with progress. Within this repertoire, quotas are defended by appealing to the different kind of expertise and experience that women have. Arguments highlight the various benefits women bring to boards of directors and thereby to the economy and the society. The repertoire of diversity is closer to the traditional meaning of an 'interpretative repertoire' (Potter & Wetherell 1987), a discursive unit of terms and metaphors drawn upon to characterize and evaluate actions and events.

Extract 4. (Democrat 18.3)

(...) The old-boy network traditionally builds on the catechism: “may a woman be silent in a church”. So far no one has given up power voluntarily, not even male leaders (Hitler/ Saddam). It is only women’s own will, used with the help of western democracy that can get women as managers of companies, army and the navy, the church, the government etc., in command of all the troops traditionally lead by ‘the old-boys’. (...)

In extract 4, the operating principles of the old-boy network are illustrated by the metaphor of catechism, which creates old fashioned connotations. At best, metaphors create precisely the wanted connotations without complex argumentation (Gill & Whedbee 1997). Religious connotations are indeed quite far from connotations connected to modern and dynamic business life. Therefore, this metaphor succeeds in constructing the old-boy network as a stagnant institution. Another rhetorical means to support one’s argument is to paint the side one advocates with beautiful and positive colours, and accordingly, the opposite side with negative meanings (Jokinen 2006: 153).

We shall next elaborate on two frameworks framing the whole discussion of quotas: equality and competence. They provide important linguistic resources both for the opponents and advocates.

Framework of equality

Within the framework of equality, there are many possibilities to argue against or for quotas. Therefore, it is not surprising that equality is intertwined with all of the four repertoires analyzed above. Opponents of quotas identify equality with fair treatment and justice, and those in favour consider them as necessary means to gain equality.

Opponents of quotas see quotas as a cause of injustice. In our data, many of the opponents of quotas compare the Finnish model of equality to feminism, which brings along negative connotations among those, who think that feminism aims at increasing inequality (Raevaara 2005).

Extract 5. (Jipsu 11.6.2006)

Feminists have high-jacked equality in a similar way as communists did by monopolizing pacifism. If a woman earns more than a man, it is because of her competence, if a man earns more it is due to the patriarchal structures of the society.

The definition of equality as hostile and one-sided feminism uses categorization as convincing rhetoric. Categories can be used to legitimize or criticize an issue (Billig 1987). Here, the opponents of quotas have categorized feminism as an one-sided and fanatic ideology. Another common feature in the critical texts is the valuing of promotion of equality by natural means, e.g., through changing attitudes. These texts resist all legal and coercive measures that would involve in this 'natural' continuum.

Advocates of quotas see quotas as a means towards equality. They focus on the collective level: the Finnish society and the discriminative structures and practices in working life. The following statement depicts one of these practices "... there exist roughly the same rules for women and men; the problem is that the competence of men and women is measured by a different yardstick..." The advocates question the perception of Finland as a country of high equality. They ask if there are equal opportunities for women and men to enter corporate boards. Many texts in favour of quotas use central feminist assumptions by referring to hidden discrimination of women. This discrimination is rooted deep in the structures of society and attitudes of people.

Gender and competence

It is a common myth that selection in organizations is based on an applicant's competence and merits, not on gender. This is also visible in our data. Companies are seen as 'meritocratic systems' where everybody gets what s/he deserves. Both the advocates and the critics drew on competence as a criterion for selection. However, there are differences between the opponents and the advocates concerning the actual functioning and fairness of these meritocratic systems. The emphasis on competence

reflects both the valuing of meritocracy and the centrality of profit thinking in listed companies: everyone has to earn her/his place on the board.

Opponents of quotas let the most competent win. “Gender shouldn’t be a deciding factor, but competence should be”; this is the most common argument in the opposing texts. The opponents interpret quotas as a way that gender in itself would be the essential criteria of selection; it would pass competence. Women and incompetent women, in particular, would be chosen on boards. The basic assumption among the opponents is that in Finland listed companies operate in an efficient meritocratic context. Quotas would simply ruin the well functioning system. The opponents of quotas also think that quotas would question the existing expertise and competence of women. Women who get a board membership are unambiguously categorized as ‘quota-women’. Some writers in data use an expression of ‘quota-chicken’, highlighting the negative nature of categorization. “I really don’t need any quotas to get a position or job, and I definitely don’t want to be any kind of a quota-woman”, says one writer.

Advocates of quotas refer to women’s lesser opportunities. Even though opponents and advocates of quotas have differing opinions of competence, both believe that the owners of listed companies make their choices based on merits and competence. In contrast to the opponents, the advocates do not look at the matter at an individual level, but question the meritocratic system by pointing out that women do not have similar opportunities to get in boards. The requirement of multiple competencies is one of the hidden gender-related discriminative practices in working life together with the existence of old-boys networks.

Summary and discussion

The aim of this paper was to analyse public discussion on the internet discussion site of the Helsingin Sanomat concerning the proposal for gender-based quotas on corporate boards. Texts in the media and on discussion sites in particular are a relevant object of research by contributing to the collective understanding of the topics in question. Compared with traditional media, an internet discussion site has the advantage of providing an opportunity for anybody to express opinions and discuss whatever subject. By applying rhetorical discourse analysis, it is possible to make visible the strategies of creating ‘reality’ in these texts.

Table 1. Summary of the discourse analysis of the quota debate on an internet discussion site

| | Interpretative repertoires | Assumptions connected with equality | Assumptions connected with competence |
|----------------------------|---|--|--|
| Critics of quotas | Repertoire of personal experiences Repertoire of ridiculous quotas Repertoire of economic facts | Quotas increase inequality Equality will overtake as a 'natural' development Contemplation at individual level | Assumption of existing meritocracy Women lack relevant experience |
| Advocates of quotas | Repertoire of diversity | Hidden discrimination of women Contemplation at collective level | Assumption of existing meritocracy Women have to be more competent to get on the list of candidates |

Table 1 summarizes the results of our analysis. Within the dominant critical position, we distinguished three repertoires used to argue against quotas. First, in the repertoire of personal experiences, the rhetorical strategy was to draw mainly on one's long-term experiences and to position oneself as part of the phenomenon. Second, in the repertoire of ridiculous quotas, sarcasm, irony and rhetorical questions were used to make the opposing arguments look questionable. Third, in the repertoire of economic facts, a typical rhetorical strategy was to write in factual reporting style that faded out the person of the writer. Within the defending argumentation position there was a repertoire that appealed to diversity. Writers in this repertoire used mostly the same rhetorical means as in the criticising repertoires and, in addition, pairs of contrasts.

In addition to these four repertoires, we identified two broader sets of meanings or 'frames'. The frames of 'equality' and 'competence' were used both in texts criticising and supporting the quotas. However, the argumentation positions differed in the ways the frames were used and how the key concepts were defined. A main finding was that the opponents of quotas look at the issue of women's low number on corporate boards at the individual level, while the advocates of quotas look at the collective level. Regarding the future, the opponents rely on the 'natural' increase of women on boards' as the old-boy network is retiring and the level of women's education continues to rise. The advocates of quotas, on the contrary, highlighted that laws and regulations are

necessary in order to make attitudes, societal structures and practices more gender-equal. Concerning competence, neither the opponents nor the advocates of quotas questioned the assumption that big corporations use meritocratic recruitment criteria. However, the advocates thought that the meritocratic system is not functioning efficiently, and only quotas would put women on same starting line with equally competent men.

In these texts, incompetence was represented as a feminine character and competence as masculine one. This finding is similar to prior research that has showed that men are considered as the norm in competence discourse (e.g. Tienari et al. 2004). Thus, the texts analyzed reproduced and sustained prior stereotypical assumptions, which, on their part, hinder women to be considered as relevant candidates for corporate boards. In the critical texts, quotas were seen to override competence: a woman would be chosen only due to her gender, and as a 'quota-woman' she could not possess all the (other) required competencies. This reflects the classical notion of tokenism (Kanter 1977).

As the analysis of this debate shows, the media have a powerful position in using language as it may promote particular versions of social reality, and marginalize and exclude others (Fairclough 1995). The media have an impact on knowledge, beliefs, values, social relations and identities. The rhetorical discourse analysis conducted in this paper has illuminated the various positions and frames used to construct understandings of gender quotas. It has contributed to research on gender quotas by broadening the scope of argumentation related to them and by providing new perspectives for examining the existing gender imbalance in the top business positions.

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Leading your Audit Team: On the importance of team gender

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Introduction

As auditing is inherently a judgment and decision-making process, audit quality is ultimately contingent upon the auditor's judgment and decision-making qualities (Knechel 2000). Except in the case of the smallest audits (Solomon 1987), audit fieldwork is however not conducted by a single auditor, but by a *team* of auditors, reviewed by managers and partners, and results with the issuance of an audit report (Ahlawat 1999). This multi-person dimension of the audit has been widely recognized in the auditing literature (e.g. Bamber 1983; Power 2003; Rich, Solomon & Trotman 1997a; Solomon 1987). Researchers have however focused heavily on the judgment and decision-making of individual auditors, ignoring the multi-person reality in which auditors have to make real judgments and decisions.²⁷

Most research on multi-auditor judgment and decision-making has focused on the audit review process. The term review process refers to judgments and decisions that are made in a hierarchical, sequential, and iterative way (i.e. managers reviewing staff/preparers' work and partners reviewing managers' work) and is the main quality control mechanism in the audit process (Gibbins & Trotman 2002; Rich, Solomon & Trotman 1997b; Solomon 1987). In general, the audit engagement partner issues the firm's audit opinion based upon work prepared by staff/preparers and managers, and (in the case of audits of listed companies or when the audit firm has determined that it is required [ISA 220, § 19]) reviewed by another partner (i.e. an engagement quality control reviewer). Rich et al. (1997a) noted however the elimination of the multilayered detail review and a move to a situation where audit teams plan the review process for each section of the audit, with these planning discussions based on risk. While work

²⁷ Of the 1647 articles that are in the database of the AAA Auditing Section (documenting all auditing articles published since 1975 in the following journals: Accounting, Organizations and Society, Auditing: A Journal of Practice and Theory, Behavioral Research in Accounting, Contemporary Accounting Research, Journal of Accounting and Economics, Journal of Accounting and Public Policy, Journal of Accounting Research, and The Accounting Review) only 30 are on audit teams (with 19 of these articles predating the review of Rich et al. [1997a])

related to assertions judged to be of higher risk may still be reviewed by multiple members of the audit team, only one level of review is planned for assertions judged to be of low or moderate risk. Past decades interacting groups have thus become more and more important in supporting audit team activities (e.g. audit planning and reporting phases) (Ashton, Kleinmuntz & Sullivan 1988) so that “a degree of fuzziness has been introduced into the hierarchical audit team structure as the preparer and reviewer work side-by-side” (Rich et al. 1997a:89). In light of these changes in the audit environment, the need for group research in auditing was even greater after the Rich et al. (1997a) review than before. Back then, Rich et al. (1997a:118-119) wrote that there is “still a long path to travel before sufficient systematic evidence exists to support a well-developed model of the circumstances under which and reasons why the various multi-person audit judgment/decision making formats are most effective.” Unfortunately research did not progress far along this path since then. Only very recently Kleinman and Palmon (2009:148) even noted that “relatively little literature exists on the factors that affect group decision-making in auditing”.

Consequently, audit team leaders are still very much in the dark about how to manage their teams effectively. Given that team leaders play a key role in the creation and maintenance of effective teams (Zaccaro, Rittman & Marks 2001), this is quite problematic. One aspect that audit team leaders may need to take into account is a group’s gender composition. Various non-auditing/accounting research (e.g. Dufwenberg & Murenb 2006) has shown that gender composition may impact groups’ performances. Despite the fact that, already a decade ago, Bedard and Maroney (1999) called for attention for the effect of gender on the interaction and performance of audit groups, auditing and accounting researchers remained silent about this topic. In this study, we investigate the impact of gender composition on the performance of males and females working on an audit task.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. In the section following this introduction, we give a short overview of the background literature and we formulate our hypotheses. In the subsequent section, we turn to our empirical research and outline our quasi-experimental design. We analyze the performances on an assignment ‘Financial statement analysis’ of 330 college students self assigned into 49 all-female, 41 mixed, and 75 all-male dyads. This quasi-experiment confirms the better performance of (audit) groups compared to individual (auditor) performances. Furthermore, it found significantly greater gains for the mixed and all-male dyads than

for the all-female dyads (while no differences were found between mixed and all-male dyads). In the final section, we discuss our results and the limitations of this research.

Background and hypotheses development

Do two heads audit better than one?

The rationale for audit firms to rely on the review process as a quality control mechanism is the intuitive appealing idea that ‘two heads are better than one’ (Asare 1999), but does the audit review process indeed improve audit quality? In other words, do audit teams make better judgments and decisions than individual auditors?

The first empirical evidence on the effectiveness of the review process was provided by Trotman (1985) who found that judgments after review were significantly more accurate than those prior to review. Ismail and Trotman (1995) found audit teams also outperforming individual auditors in the planning stage of the audit (i.e. teams generated more plausible hypotheses). The experiment of Libby and Trotman (1993) suggested that the review process can act as an effective control because preparers and reviewers focus their attention on different types of information. Furthermore, the results of Reimers and Fennema (1999) suggested that reviewers may use different cognitive processes than preparers; so the review process may serve an important function beyond that of simply a second opinion. More recently, Owoso, Messier and Lynch (2002:899) concluded that “the current review process is effective because of the complementary nature of the error types detected by seniors and managers when they are working within specialization.” Altogether there is enough evidence to assume that audit teams indeed make better judgments and decisions than individual auditors. Similar conclusions stems from psychological research on group performance (cf. Kerr & Tindale, 2004). Based on this literature, we formulate the following hypotheses:

H1: groups perform better than one would expect by averaging their members’ abilities.

H2: groups perform better than the best member of their group.

Groups' gender composition

It has been a decade since Bedard and Maroney (1999) proclaimed that “the effect of gender on the interaction and performance of small groups [...] is an important area for behavioural accounting researchers to pursue”. Not a single study was published on this topic since. As the audit profession is further moving towards gender balance (e.g. nowadays females make up more than fifty percent of the entry-level talent pool [AICPA, 2008]), it is today even truer that “it is very likely that many audit decisions are made in groups comprised of both men and women” (Bedard & Maroney 1999). Hence, if we are concerned about how (real) audit judgments and decisions are made we need to know if the gender composition of audit groups has an impact on such judgments and decisions.

Various non-auditing/accounting research has shown that gender composition may indeed impact groups' performances (e.g. Dufwenberg & Murenb 2006). Recent experimental evidence (cf. Ivanova-Stenzel & Kübler 2005) shows that the gender composition of teams affects team productivity, and in particular that women perform worse in gender-mixed teams. Women who are 'solo' in otherwise male groups perform less well as the men, while men solos perform just as well as the women in their groups (Stewart & McDermott 2004).²⁸ On the other hand, LePine, Hollenbeck, Ilgen, Colquitt & Ellis (2002) found in their study that “despite the fact that the cognitive task employed in this study was masculine in nature, inaccuracy in decision-making was actually an exponential function of the number of males on the team.” Furthermore, mixed groups may perform better than single sex groups because men and women have different cognitive styles (cf. Halpern 2000) and diversity of cognitive style (i.e. members who ‘think differently’ and cooperate) is much more effective than ability diversity (i.e. using more capable members to create high performance homogenous groups) to increase the accuracy of multi-agent group decision processes (cf. West & Dellana 2009). In a meta-analysis comprising 13 studies Bowers, Pharmer and Salas (2000) however, found no reliable relationship between gender – or any other measure of diversity – and group performance. Another observation that may be interpreted as favouring mixed groups is the fact that individuals seem to behave more gender role consistent when interacting in same gender dyads than individuals in mixed gender dyads (Weber, Wittchen & Hertel 2009). Reviewing the literature on work group diversity, van Knippenberg and Schippers (2007:532) concluded recently that

²⁸ Inzlicht and Ben-Zeev (2000) even showed that the mere presence of men worsened the performance of women on a difficult math test.

regarding its effects on group performance “much is still unclear about the effects of diversity”. Given these findings, we test the following hypotheses:

H3: all-male groups perform worse than all-female groups.

H4: all-male groups perform worse than mixed groups.

H5: mixed groups perform better than all-female groups.²⁹

Research methods and results

Participants and material

We analyzed the performances of 330 college students self assigned into 49 all-female, 41 mixed, and 75 all-male dyads. In order to obtain their master’s degree, these business students took a course ‘Financial statement analysis and auditing’. For this course, they had to take an *individual* written final exam and a *group* assignment ‘Financial statement analysis’, of which the aim was to analyze and interpret the financial statements of a large non-listed company and to comment on the company’s financial performance.

Results

To test H1 we compared group performances on the assignment ‘Financial statement analysis’ with the averaged grades of their members on the individual written exam.³⁰ We found, in accordance with H1, the mean performance of groups to be significant higher than the mean averaged grades (Cohen’s $d = 1.06$) ($p = .000$). The mean averaged grades was 60.61% ($s = 10.25$) based upon the group members’ performance

²⁹ We acknowledge that, contrary to our expectations, Mannix and Neale (2005) concluded that while the results for gender are mixed (with several studies showing neutral results), surface-level social-category differences tend to be more likely to have negative effects on the ability of groups to function effectively.

³⁰ While this may not be a perfect point of reference, the meta-analysis of Devine and Philips (2001) found that the mean score of team members (as an operational proxy of cognitive ability) was the best predictor of team performance, especially in laboratory settings.

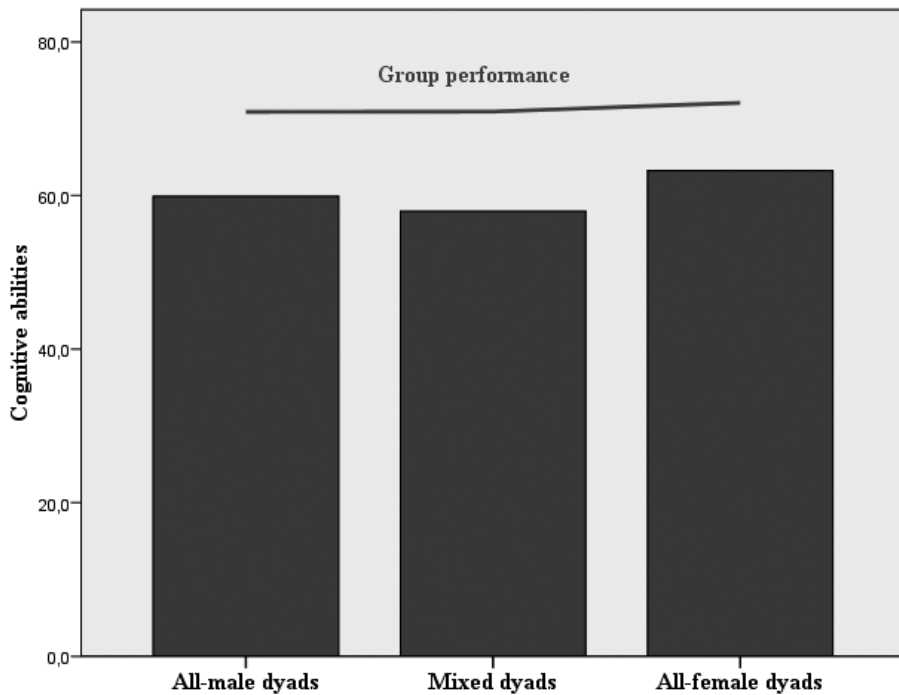
on the exam of the course 'Financial Statement Analysis and Auditing'. The mean performance of groups was 71.28% ($s = 9.93$) (on the assignment 'Financial statement analysis'). The correlation ($r = .482$) between mean averaged grades and group performance was also significant ($p = .000$).

The mean grade of the best member was 66.79% ($s = 11.41$) based upon the performances on the individual written exam. Hence, as predicted by H2, groups performed better than their best member (Cohen's $d = 0.42$) ($p = .000$). However, it is worth noting that the increase in performance made by groups was smaller compared to what one would expect based upon the performance of their best members than based upon the averaged grades of all the group's members.

The mean performance of all-male groups did not differ from the mean performance of all-female groups ($p = .412$) or from the mean performance of mixed groups ($p = .734$). However, to test H3 and H4 properly, we must take into account the individual group members' abilities.³¹ Comparing the cognitive abilities of individuals of different dyad compositions we found no difference between all-male and mixed groups ($p = .335$). We did, however, find such a difference between all-male and all-female groups favouring all-female groups (Cohen's $d = 0.35$) ($p = .064$). In other words, all-female groups did not perform better than all-male groups notwithstanding the fact that, on average, all-female groups were composed of individuals with higher cognitive abilities than all-male groups. Given their abilities all-female groups did, thus, underperform vis-à-vis all-male groups.

To test H5 we compared, analogous to the above, the performances of all-female groups and mixed groups. A straightforward comparison of all-female and mixed groups revealed, again, no difference ($p = .378$). Taking differences in cognitive abilities in account our results are, however, supportive for H5 since all-female groups were, on average, higher ability groups than mixed groups (Cohen's $d = 0.49$) ($p = .025$). Mixed groups performed just as well as all-female groups although the latter possessed higher cognitive abilities than the former. In other words, the female advantage was lost in the group setting. Taking cognitive abilities as a starting point, we observe that individuals working in mixed and all-male dyads gained more from working together than individuals in all-female dyads (figure 1).

³¹ Dyads were not composed randomly, but through self-assignment so we cannot safely assume that cognitive abilities are randomly distributed across different dyad compositions. We used the performances on the individual written final exam as a proxy for individuals' cognitive abilities, which should be a good approximation since academic achievement is largely determined by cognitive ability (cf. Deary, Strand, Smith & Fernandes, 2007).

Figure 1: Groups' gender composition, cognitive abilities, and task performance

Discussion and limitations

Discussion

Research has yielded mixed results regarding the advantage of diversity, especially gender, on group performance. In our quasi-experimental setting working in group appeared to be more advantageous for all-male and mixed groups than for all-female dyads. How do we interpret these results: Why did all-male and mixed groups gain more from working in a group setting than all-female groups and, especially, why were there significantly greater gains for mixed groups compared to all-female dyads, but not compared to all-male dyads?

Notwithstanding the fact that several studies on the effects of gender composition on group performances found no relationship or negative effects (cf. Bowers et al. 2000; Mannix & Neale 2005), we expected mixed dyads to gain the most from working in a group setting because diversity of cognitive style effectively increases group performance (e.g. West & Dellana 2009) and men and women have different cognitive

styles (cf. Halpern 2000). Our results do not contradict this hypothesis and confirm thereby Seol's (2006) finding of maximizing effects of auditor interaction when the members of a dyad are different. Shortly, mixed dyads gained from the group setting because it engendered a 'cognitive match'.

At first sight it seems less evident that individuals of all-female dyads gain less from working together than individuals of mixed dyads while this is not true for individuals working together in all-male dyads. Especially when one takes into account LePine et al.'s (2002) finding of all-male groups performing worse than any other configuration, these results appear puzzling. However, we believe that the all-female dyads' smaller performance gains may have resulted as a consequence of the prescriptive nature of gender stereotypes activated in all-female groups (but not in mixed dyads) working in a traditionally male domain.

This can be understood by the way the background frame of gender interacts with the organizational frame within which individuals act (cf. Ridgeway 2009). Most simply put, that means that we need to understand gender as something that one *does* rather than something that one *is*, like West and Zimmerman (1987) meant by "doing gender". Stereotypes are not only descriptive in nature (i.e. what we think males and females are and do), but just as much prescriptive (i.e. what we think males and females should be and do) (Prentice & Carranza 2002; Rudman & Phelan 2008) and accounting and auditing are still strongly gender-typed in favour of men in our society. The socially constructed ideas about the skills and abilities an auditor should possess are those associated with (stereotyped) maleness (Fogarty, Parler & Robinson 1998); for example, the perceptual association of accounting with mathematics. It is well-documented that stereotype threat can harm stereotyped individuals' performance (e.g. Spencer, Steele & Quinn 1999). Furthermore, female students in traditionally masculine study fields experience more stereotype threat than those in traditionally feminine fields (Steele, James & Barnett 2002). The degree to which gender stereotypes implicitly shape behaviour and judgments is dependent on the extent that gender is culturally defined as relevant to the situation, as, for instance, with a gender-typed task such as math (Ridgeway & Correll 2004; Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin 1999). Thus, altogether the course 'Financial statement analysis and auditing' is rather male gendered. The result of this is that the performances and behaviours of females might be biased in gendered directions. This is true for the females working in all-female and mixed dyads, but females appear to behave more gender role consistent when interacting in all-female dyads than in mixed dyads (Carli 1989; Leszczynski & Strough 2008; Leszczynski 2009).

– however, Pickard & Strough 2003 found exactly the opposite result). Therefore, building on Ridgeway (2009), we would like to suggest that in the context of our assignment for the course ‘Financial statement analysis and auditing’ the background gender frame is powerfully relevant and creates strong implicit biases against women’s competence. In the mixed dyads this gender bias gets overpowered by the gains that arise from the ‘cognitive match’ of males and females, but in the all-female dyads it might just hurt women’s performances.

Limitations

The quasi-experimental nature of our research has the advantage that it provides a degree of realism that would be hard to reach in a fully controlled experimental environment. The assignment ‘Financial statement analysis’ is rather similar to a real world auditing task. Moreover, since business students do not get much opportunity to engage in group assignments with one another our setting is also rather similar to the real situation of changing compositions of audit teams from engagement to engagement, a specific attribute in which public accounting firms differ from other employment (Almer, Higgs & Hooks 2005; Fogarty & Uliss 2000).

These benefits however, do not come free. We have to face the same limitations as every quasi-experiment (cf. Levitt & List 2009). Firstly, the issue of replication: the opportunistic nature of our research (i.e. the experiment was ‘conducted’ because the data were available) does not guarantee the possibility of replication. Secondly, the problem of distinguishing between alternative theories: to some degree we were able to control for background abilities of the participating individuals, but we had less control over all relevant variables (e.g. self-assessed intelligence) than we would have had in the lab (certainly *ex ante*, but even *ex post*). Thirdly, randomization bias: although Levitt and List (2009:14) believe that “in the bulk of field experiments randomization bias will likely not be an important issue”, it might infer with our results because individuals were self assigned into dyads – and although we related group performances to individuals’ cognitive abilities the forming of dyads was certainly not random, leaving the possibility for confounding influences biasing our results.

Conclusion

In this paper, we reviewed the past research on audit groups and took up the challenge of investigating the impact of gender composition on group performance. The importance of gender composition for group performance is not clear from research from outside the auditing/accounting area (Bowers et al. 2000; van Knippenberg & Schippers 2007; Mannix & Neale 2005), but only the fact that it *may* have an influence on the effectivity and/or efficiency of audit teams should be enough to make it a concern to audit researchers and practitioners since more and more women are entering the profession and it is very likely that many/most audit decisions are made in groups comprised of both men and women. A decade ago Bedard and Maroney (1999) called this an important area to pursue, but not a single study was published since then. Nonetheless, the importance of the audit team is great and obvious; audits are not performed by isolated individuals, but by audit teams.

Progress has been made since the Rich et al. (1997a) paper was published, but still “relatively little literature exists on the factors that affect group decision-making in auditing” (Kleinman & Palmon 2009:148). This is problematic because, as pointed out by Hogarth (1991), the key to success in auditing may lie in the ability to coordinate a series of different tasks rather than in performing each task in an optimal manner. Audit team leaders have, therefore, an important role to play in the creation and maintenance of effective audit teams. It is, thus, quite troubling that there is almost no research available that can tell them what they need to take into account (e.g. group’s gender composition) in order to accomplish this.

In line with research from other domains (cf. Kerr & Tindale 2004) our experiment found groups outperforming individuals. Somewhat surprisingly however, a straightforward comparison of groups with different gender compositions did not show any difference in performance. There were however, significant differences in cognitive abilities between individuals of all-female groups on the one hand and all-male and mixed groups on the other hand. Given these differences, the absence of group performance differences can be interpreted as all-female dyads underperforming vis-à-vis all-male and mixed dyads. We suggest that this can be understood by the way the gender frame interacts with the persisting stereotyped image of the maleness of accounting and auditing.

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Gender and Technology in Small ICT Companies

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Introduction

This paper explores interpretations of technology in the everyday life of small ICT service companies controlled by women owner-managers. Drawing on cultural studies of technology and feminist technology studies, the paper examines how the women owner-managers interpret and engage with technology in their daily work, and how gender is constructed in this process. Altogether, the study provides new knowledge about the active interpretative work the women owner-managers perform with technology in the specific context of the Finnish software service business.

The analysis follows two conceptual premises, the first one of which is to understand *technology as practice* that includes physical objects and artifacts, forms of knowledge, and activities through which technologies are put to use (MacKenzie & Wajcman 1999; Wajcman 1991). The second point of departure is to conceptualize *technology as a gendered practice*, which means that gender and technology as *co-constructed* (Faulkner 2000, 2007; Lohan 2000; Ormrod 1995). This means that gender is intricately interwoven with technology, as it is with any other social institution, and gender and technology are continuously produced in relation to one and other (Faulkner, 2007). Thus, both gender and technology are approached here as something we ‘do’ on an everyday basis (Gherardi 1994; Katila & Meriläinen 1999; West & Zimmerman 1987).

Through ethnographic analysis, the paper illustrates how the women owner-managers apply and engage with different forms of knowledge that they label as ‘technical’ and ‘social’, and how this constitutes the practitioners as gendered subjects (e.g. Rasche & Chia 2009). Furthermore, the paper illustrates how the owner-managers aim for

translating technology into business, and how this reproduces the entrenched technical/social dualisms in the Finnish small business context.

Theoretical perspective

My analysis of how the women owner-managers of small technology companies construct interpretations of technology in their daily work draws conceptual and theoretical resources on cultural studies of technology, and feminist technology studies. In cultural studies of technology, technology is considered as something that is constantly produced and reproduced in our everyday life, whereas feminist technology studies consider the mutual relationship between gender and technology. Apart from these research fields, the analysis is inspired by the 'practice turn' in organizational and management research. In particular, the post-structural understanding of practices as historically and culturally situated ways of thinking, knowing, feeling and doing (Bordieu 1990; Foucault 1977; Rasche & Chia 2009; Reckwitz 2002) offers inspiration to conceptualize technology as a (gendered) practice.

The cultural-feminist approach to technology challenges the idea of neutral, taken-for-granted technologies. According to Wajcman (1991: 22), 'women's exclusion from, and rejection of, technology is made more explicable by an analysis of technology as a culture that expresses and consolidates relations among men.' Thus, technology can be understood as a culture that is symbolically connected with the ideology of masculinity, which then constructs 'a set of assumptions about what counts as technical knowledge' (Grint & Gill 1995: 2; Wajcman 1991). Put it differently: as the ideology of masculinity becomes an integral part of our definitions of technology, technology or technological expertise become integral parts of masculine gender-identities (Cockburn 1985; Wajcman 1991). Whereas masculinity is identified with skill and technology (and skill and technology with masculinity), domains of life that are culturally coded as feminine become labelled as unskilled and non-technological (Cockburn 1983; Henttonen, LaPointe, Pesonen & Vanhala in process; Wilson 1992).

These arguments suggest that gender and technology are continuously *co-constructed* (Faulkner 2000, 2007; Lohan 2000; Ormrod 1995; Wajcman 2000). Co-construction of gender and technology means that gender is intricately interwoven with technology, as it is with any other social institution, and gender and technology are continuously

produced in relation to one and other (Faulkner 2007). With regard to research this means a focus on the continuous construction of the gender-technology relation, and conceptualizations of gender and technology as performed and processual in character (Faulkner 2000).

With regard to my analysis, I find the three-layer understanding of technology that Wajcman (1991) and MacKenzie and Wajcman (1999) put forward very useful. At the most basic level, technology refers to sets of *physical objects and artifacts*, such as cars or computers. However, these objects and artifacts are meaningless without know-how to design and use them. Therefore, technology also refers to *forms of knowledge*, i.e. ways of knowing and know-how about and with technology. In addition to what people know, technology refers to what people do, i.e. the set of *human activities and practices* through which technologies are put into use. The authors thus suggest that technology should not be viewed as artifacts and hardware alone, but rather as a complex system of meanings in which these three layers – artifacts, knowledge, and practices – intertwine. Technology is ‘a cultural product which is historically constituted by certain sorts of knowledge and social practices’ (Wajcman, 1991, 158). It is thus not reasonable to conceptualize artifacts (the hardware) and knowledge (the knowing) as discrete from what is considered as practice (the doing). Instead, we should analyse how technology as a social and cultural practice emerges through acts of knowing, doing, using, and making meaning.

Methods

The paper relies on the ethnographic research approach. Ethnographic research studies people in naturally occurring settings (the ‘field’), and involves the researcher participating in people’s daily lives for certain period of time in order to collect data in a systematic manner (Brewer 2000; Hammersley & Atkinson 1995). In practice, the researchers spend time in the communities they are studying, document their observations and experiences for research purposes, and report their findings in a form of ethnographic writing.

The empirical material of this paper is produced in a research project that I carried out together with Päivi Eriksson and Susan Meriläinen. Our research project focused on women owner-managers of small ICT-companies in Finland (e.g. Eriksson, Henttonen

& Meriläinen 2008a; 2008b), and included versatile empirical material: we surveyed the field as whole, did interviews with 17 women owner-managers of small ICT-companies, collected various media and documentary materials, and completed ethnographic fieldwork with four of these women. In each of the four companies, we observed the everyday work during one week. This meant that the three of us ‘shadowed’ (Bruni et al. 2004) the owner-managers and wrote down what we heard and saw. In the first three companies, the field work was performed by Elina and Susan, who did part of the shadowing together and took turns in doing the rest. In the fourth company, all three of us took turns doing the fieldwork.

According to Van Maanen (1995), ethnography is a ‘storytelling institution’ that includes many different forms and practices. In this paper I have chosen to reconstruct incidents and discussions in the field that I regard notable and reportable from the perspective of my research question, i.e. interpretation of technology. More particularly, I have read through the fieldwork material several times and sorted out elements that deal with technology and its different interpretations: technological devices, artifacts, and symbols; technological knowledge and know-how; and practices that consist of knowing and doing related to technology. Equally important, I have paid attention to what is *not* considered or defined as technology, and how divisions are made between technology and other domains of everyday work. Thereafter, I have accounted for these findings in a form of descriptive writing, which draws together the observations from the field and my interpretation about their meaning. Moreover, these interpretations are set in a dialogue with an ongoing scholarly debate about the gender-technology relation.

Interpretations of technology

All four companies of this study can be defined as software service companies. The first company, *Firemot Ltd.*, operates in one of the rapidly expanding areas of software business, and offers specialized business-to-business services to larger software companies. Graduate engineer and CEO Jaana Niemi established the company with two of her colleagues about seven years ago. Firemot is her second venture within the software business, which makes her an experienced business owner and manager. *Kollabs Ltd.*, the second company, helps other companies to automate their business processes through machine-to-machine communication. The CEO of the company,

Kaisa Aho, was recruited to the 12-year-old firm about five years ago, and she also bought a share of the company. Kaisa has a degree in business studies and has been working as a business expert and manager within the ICT sector for all of her 22-year career. The third company, *TRICT Ltd.*, is an ICT training centre, which specializes in the development and use of ICT applications, system management, and data security. Merja Palo has been the CEO for five years. She has a bachelor's degree in public administration, an MBA degree in progress, and a 15-year-long work history of administrative work in the business. TRICT is the fourth ICT-training company in which Merja has worked and she knows the business and the people like her own pockets. The fourth company is *Content Ltd.*; a tiny cross media and e-business company involved in customizing various types of software solutions for its customers. Tiina Savo established Content Ltd. with her business partner about four years ago. Tiina has both technical and commercial training and a lot of experience as a manager and an entrepreneur.

The parts of the following text that are italicized are verbatim translations from the owner-managers' speech documented in the field notes (which were recorded in Finnish). To provide anonymity, the names of all people and companies that appear in the text are pseudonyms.

Practicing knowledges, constituting knowers

In these four ICT companies technology refers to 'high-tech' products and tools that are based on latest developments in information and communication technologies. No one refers to traditional telephones, for example, that stand in the offices (but hardly ever ring) as technology, nor are the coffee-makers, cars, elevators or office chairs defined as technological per se. This is something to keep in mind when we proceed with the analysis of technical knowledge: in this context, it refers explicitly to know-how related to information technology. This also has a bearing on the gendered meanings that are constructed through the interpretations of technology. For example, the masculinities that are enacted in this context do not refer to the traditional shop-floor masculinity that assumes physical strength, but to masculinities that arise from the white-collar engineering culture (Wajcman 1991).

With regard to their own position, the owner-managers continuously define themselves as non-experts in using ordinary office technology. In addition, it seems to be a funny habit for other people to make jokes of their capacity in understanding technical issues. In Firemot, for example, everybody (including Jaana herself) make jokes about software breaking down when she touches the computer. Jaana herself laughs: *'I'm probably the dumbest person in this company!'* and continues to position herself *'as a sort of a chief cook and bottle-washer who knows a little about everything but much about nothing.'* Later Jaana and the sales manager Tom discuss whether an ASP [a certain programming system] is an option for them. Jaana states: *'I don't want to meddle in this or make decisions concerning it, I just want to use the system that we'll have someday'*. Tom throws in a witty remark: *'Well then the system should definitely be easy to use'* and laughs up one's sleeve.

Similar kind of interaction takes place at TRICT. Merja discusses with Peter, a partner, about renewing their enterprise resource planning system. Peter's first wish is that *'I don't want it to be XML!'* Merja responds to the technical abbreviations by *'Now I have to say that I don't understand the technology at all.'* Despite her dismissive comment, she has strong visions regarding the implementation of the system. In the middle of the discussion Peter notices that Merja has a new laptop. *'Yes, I got it yesterday and I'm very pleased with it'*, Merja explains, but immediately laughs that *'I'm also very clumsy with it!'* Also Tiina from Content Ltd. confesses having trouble with daily software such as MS Word, which she could *'throw out of the window once a day.'* Despite her technical education and the fact that she's done programming and constructed various databases for her customers she highlights that *'I'm not interested in technology on a deep level, I'm more into people, communications, and business know-how.'*

What happens here is that despite these women have established and/or lead companies whose existence is based on technology and technological expertise (and despite they, from my perspective, were highly capable in utilizing office technology) they (and others) downgrade their know-how as users, developers and decision-makers of technology. In other words, technical know-how is constructed as a particular form of knowledge that they do not master, or strive to master. Additional manifestations of this are their characterizations of themselves such as 'dum' or 'clumsy'. The owner-managers also distance themselves from detailed technological decisions concerning the business, and tend to emphasize how they prefer taking a broader perspective on business by focusing on people and communications. This take place even to the extent

that two different forms of knowledge – ‘technical’ and ‘social’ – are constructed in their speech.

The division between different types of knowledge is constructed not only when the owner-managers position themselves, but also when they differentiate between different ‘types’ of engineers and their skills. Kaisa describes their employees as: *‘two categories of people: engineers and talking engineers. In other words: the engineers, who do the basic stuff, think three-dimensionally, the ones that you can hear when they process things. And then the talking engineers, who mediate this information and apply it to customers’ and partners’ systems.’* Also Jaana in Firemot classifies their employees in two groups: the ones who know how to interact with the customers, and those who ‘only’ focus on technical issues. In this small business context, therefore, technical knowledge is interpreted as something specific and narrow in character, while other forms of knowledge are interpreted more of a diverse type. Kaisa’s statement about a problem she is dealing with is illustrative: *‘This is not a technical issue, it’s much more complicated!’*

The mutual exclusion of technical and social knowledge is reproduced among the personnel of Kollabs also. Physically, the two units of the company, technical production and sales/administration, are located in different wings of the premises. Moreover, the employees continuously construct differences between the working cultures of these two wings. One of the sales employees, for example, informs me that the ‘production guys’ are nerds who do not talk much, at least not with the sales people (or more importantly, with customers). He further comments to me in a sarcastic tone that *‘here [in sales] you cannot socialize solely with the computer’* just to continue by a proud remark: *‘not everyone is up to this demand.’* In the production wing I can, indeed, sense the silence as ‘the guys’ work silently on their computers behind the screens. The equally silent coffee corner is covered with engineer jokes that highlight technical detail with formulas, equations and (from my perspective) weird words. On the wall, there is a paper that says *‘To further improve our professional image we must increasingly pay attention to small things, such as dress code’*. Examples of proper clothing for men in business situations follow, assuming ironically that the (male) technology experts would not know how to dress up for customer encounters. Even the coffee machine is covered with a note: *‘Not for customers – poison of code slave level’*.

In TRICT, I observe a same kind of division between ‘technology people’ (in everyday office talk they are referred to as ‘boys’) and ‘sales and administrative people’ (mostly

referred to as ‘girls’) who are assumed to have different know-how, work spaces, work rhythms – and genders. Also Tiina from Content describes young engineers she regularly does business with as ‘*young propeller headed guys*’. Even though this comment may be dismissive in tone, the people with strong technological know-how are also constantly associated with the term ‘guru’ – a term to emphasize their special, detailed knowledge. Merja from TRICT, for example, takes advantage of the desirability of the guru status by encouraging the technology experts to write short articles in commercial/marketing purposes, ‘*to strengthen their guru profile*’.

A case in point is that gendering dynamics are at play in this process of constituting knowers and knowledges. According to Kaisa, for example, the specific technical know-how is best acquired not through studying but by fostering intense, hobbyist interest towards technology. She further describes how boys start at early ages to busy themselves with computers and learn valuable skills to become good analysts. Girls, on the other hand, do not share that interest and, following this, do not develop capabilities as potential recruits for these kinds of jobs. Faulkner (2007, 331) has noticed that also many engineers themselves ‘cleave to a technicist engineering identity’, even though their actual work would be more heterogeneous and they would have to oscillate or straddle between these different identities. It is in their occupational interest to preserve their stereotypical roles ‘by foregrounding the “core” scientific and technical expertise that only they, as engineers, can bring’ to the company (Faulkner 2007: 338).

What is reproduced is a stereotypical engineer identity that maintains the dualist assumption between ‘the narrowly specialist and more holistic and heterogeneous types of work and knowledge’ (Faulkner 2000: 762). In this small business context, the narrowly specialist work and knowledge is defined as technical, whereas the more holistic and heterogeneous work and knowledge become constructed as ‘social knowledge’, i.e. an ability to interact with various stakeholders, and apply the technical information for their needs. In addition, the emerging technical/social dualism manifests how the ‘technical’ and ‘social’ are posited as *mutually exclusive* (Faulkner 2007). Thus, identifying with the symbolic domain of the social means distancing oneself from (or at least playing down the importance of) the technical, while technically oriented engineers are assumed to be asocial. In these processes, gender and technology are continuously co-constructed: the interpretations highlight the entrenched dualism of instrumentalism (technology) and expressiveness (sociality),

which epitomize the symbolic domains of masculinities and femininities (Faulkner 2007).

This meaning-making constructs an image of engineering, or any work with technology, as a gendered profession (Peterson 2007; Powell, Bagilhole & Dainty 2009). As a result, when men and women 'do' engineering (or technology) the men often 'do' and women 'undo' their gender (Powell et al. 2009). Ruiz Ben (2007) reports that the engineers' gender roles and identities may be tied up with their specialty even to the extent that the ascription of technology comes to represent a dividing line for the definition of men's and women's positions and expertise in the practice of software development (see also Faulkner 2007). Through discursive processes, the owner-managers of this study also participate in keeping different gendered skills as discursively separate (Kelan 2008) by constructing gendered distinctions of different types of work, knowledge and knowers, and by associating and disassociating their own roles and identities with these constructions. As a result, the gender-technology relation continues to be constituted in oppositional terms (Henwood 2000).

Translating technology for business

As illustrated above, the owner-managers interpretive work with technology is constituted by, and reproducing, the mutual exclusion of technical and social knowledge. However, the owner-managers interpret technology first and foremost from the position of business owners and managers in a dynamic and competitive small business context. From the business perspective, the 'social' does not straightforwardly become less valued than the technical (contrary to what Faulkner (2000), for example, reports on software developers). In this context, the 'social' is understood as an ability to understand, work and interact with customers and other stakeholders, and a willingness to make technology work for their needs – i.e. a basic prerequisite of staying in or developing the business.

Jaana in Firemot explains *'Technology is an issue that I normally don't even discuss, because it's not so clear. What is clear is that we do business and technology is our product - or technological know-how, to be more specific.'* She emphasizes that even though the customers expect solid technological expertise, they have to be approached through their own language. In other words, the technical details must be translated

into answers for question such as what we can do for them, and how we can solve their problems. Similarly, Kaisa from Kollabs is assured that *'Our task is not to do technology for technology's sake but something that the customers start to use. I've tried to teach these technical guys of ours that we must minimize the nerd stuff, and transform the technology into commercial benefits'*. Kaisa further highlights that even though technology is the basis of all their operations, *'it needs to adapt according to business and be user-friendly'*.

The role that the owner-managers ascribe for themselves in these processes is that of translators, i.e. mediators between different forms of knowledge. Similar to the women software developers studied by Ruiz Ben (2007), who defined themselves as translators who understand customer perspectives and are able to get the customers involved in the design of software products, the owner-managers in this study emphasize that technological know-how has to be combined with business perspective ('the social'), and the specialized technical knowledge has to be transformed into customer contacts and business outcomes. This is what they do on a daily basis: alternate between the different worlds of 'propeller-headed engineers', 'talking engineers', present and potential customers, and various other actors involved in their business, and translate between them (Collins & Evans 2002).

With regard to 'doing' and 'undoing' gender in male-dominated ICT field, Guerrier, Evans, Glover and Wilson (2009: 494) recognize that these kinds of 'hybrid roles combining technical and traditionally female skills' have often been suggested as the way forward for women in ICT industry. This is because it has been assumed that the hybrid roles would 'present a new way for women to work in male-dominated environment without compromising their gender identity' (ibid.). The informants of Kelan's (2008) study, as well, constructed the ideal worker in the ICT context as a 'hybrid' having a mixture of two central competencies. Firstly, they needed to be technically competent, and secondly, emotionally and socially competent. What is noteworthy, however, is that both the 'hybrid ideal worker' and the 'interactive translator' positions are constructed through the same old entrenched technical-social dualism.

Conclusions

This paper explored interpretations of technology in the everyday life of small ICT service companies controlled by women owner-managers, and discussed the gendering

dynamics that are at play in their interpretive work with technology. The empirical analysis illustrated how the women owner-managers apply and engage with different forms of knowledge that they label as 'technical' and 'social', and how this constitutes the practitioners as gendered subjects. Furthermore, the analysis illustrates how the owner-managers aim for translating technology into business, and how this reproduces the entrenched technical/social dualisms in the Finnish small business context.

Technology is conceptualised here as practice: a system of activities that connects historically and culturally situated ways 'thinking', 'knowing', 'feeling' and 'doing' (e.g. Gherardi 2000). This means that both knowing and doing are part of the practice, and that the assumptions of different forms of knowledge (e.g. technical and social) constitute the practice as much as the practice constitutes the forms of knowing, the knowers, and the known. Moreover, these processes include gendering dynamics – the co-construction of gender and technology – that constitutes technology as a gendered practice.

In the women owner-managers' interpretative work with technology both gender and technology, and their boundaries and content, are negotiated and not pre-existing (Ormrod 1995). What is more, they are negotiated in a context of Finnish software service business. This context frames the interpretative work of the owner-managers and has a bearing on how gender and technology are made sense of. We have showed elsewhere (Eriksson, Henttonen & Meriläinen 2008a, 2008b), how the gendering processes relate strongly to the specific business contexts the owner-managers operate in. Also Faulkner (2000) argues that the tendency to construct technology through dualisms, and the form these dualisms take, are *co-constituted* by factors related to the performance of gender and technology in their contexts. Therefore, in future research on gender-technology relation we should expand the inquiry from contexts such as engineering work and profession, engineering education, information society, and consumption, to include and acknowledge the economic, industrial, and business context where, to date, we have very little research on how gender and technology figure. This paper presents a novel attempt to sketch analysis into this direction.

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Stereotypical Character of Society in the 2nd Republic of Lithuania: Women's attempts to be equal partners in the state

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The Soviet occupation of 1940 blocked the development of the state of Lithuania and its law. Lithuania regained its independence only in 1990. At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries the problems of women's rights are no longer related to the recognition of women's rights *de jure* and the legal consolidation of their equality to men, but they are related to their real implementation, as the equality of men and women is still influenced by patriarchal stereotypes in society. The development of women's rights in Lithuania is also influenced by tendencies and trends in international developments of rights. Lithuania also has been a member state of the EU since 1st May 2004. The effective Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania of 1992 consolidates the equality of men and women.

The aim of this article is to analyse Lithuania society and women's attempts to be equal partners in the state, through statistical comparative analysis.

Lithuanian society and the Women's Movement

In 1990 after regaining Lithuanian independence, women organizations began to be active. The majority of these organizations reorganized congresses, for example, the Lithuanian Women Catholic organization which was forbidden in 1940's when the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania. In the reestablished republic women's organizations set out to increase the participation of women not only in autonomous organizing, but also in the Seimas, the establishment of a separate Women's party or women's departments in already existing parties, and the development of politics around the family, child care, education, and discrimination of women in jobcentres, and so on. In 2000 the III Women's Congress, which analyzed these questions, took place. Great emphasis was placed on women's position in a changing society and the formation of a

new image for women. It was pointed out in the Congress that a stereotype of a Soviet woman was still prevailing, which did not allow them to be more independent and active. Several goals were set by Congress decisions: the participation of women in international women organizations, active women's participation in solving internal state problems, and a drive to increase the number of women politicians, encouraging them to be more active in taking part in Seimas elections. The Women's Congress proved one more time that there are many unsolved gender questions.

However, today more and more women do not conceal that their objective is to climb the career ladder, to earn a good salary, and not only raise children, do housework and gain satisfaction from work that men rely on. After Lithuanian society entered the 21st century, and the economic and social changes of the period, women have become more active while looking for well-paid jobs regarding their special skills.

Juridical acts, regulating gender relationship, can force stereotypes prevailing in society to change. On 1st December 1998 the law on Women's and Men's Equal Opportunities was approved. It came into force in 1999. The law comprises six chapters that set out the means, articles and functions of the execution of the law. The Board of Women's and Men's Equal Opportunities deals with gender discrimination, sexual harassment and other questions. This is the only institution in Lithuania that can be addressed by women and men who have experienced discrimination in the work sphere. In this way, gender equality in legal, social and economic spheres is sought to be achieved and secured.

Moreover, it is important that women organize and try to solve problems together. Relying on the data by the Women's Information Center, there were 163 non-governmental women organizations in Lithuania on 1st January 2009. One of the ways to diminish gender inequality in the state is to strengthen the women's movement, expanding its numbers and making it more united.

Women in politics

Lithuanian women have been participating in the country's political life since 1988, with the establishment of Sąjūdis movement. Women representatives in the Lithuanian parliaments are not numerous. In 1990 14 women were elected into the Supreme Council (Seime V), making 10% of the Council. Twenty-four women were elected to the

VI Sejm (Parliament) in 1992, but most, 31, were elected to the IX Sejm in 2004. In the VII Sejm (1996) the increase was unsurprising as most women's organizations were established between 1992 and 1996. The women's sections began their activities in six political parties. In 1996 the Lithuania Women's party was founded. It was led by Kazimiera Danutė Prunskienė. This was one of the factors which stimulated the other parties to include more women into their election marathons. The Women's Party was led by Prunskienė, yet later it merged with Peasants' party in 2002. In this way Lithuanian women do not now have an independent women party.

In the elections to the Seimas in 2008, 27 women were elected. Two women were elected as vice-chairpersons of the Seimas. Vida Marija Čigrijienė is the oldest member of the newly elected Seimas. Gabrielė Petkevičaitė–Bitė was also the chairperson of the first sitting of the Seimas, as happened in 1920, during the opening of the Constituent Seimas. At present, data on the elections shows that most parties increased the number of women only superficially, and mainly women were left in the second half of the list. Only some parties inserted women into the first quintile of the election lists, thus giving them opportunities for winning the elections. One must pay heed to the fact that women are also not represented enough in the executive power; their number in the Government is particularly small; usually they hold one to three ministerial offices. Only once in the whole history of Lithuania has a woman held the office of Prime Minister. The most active women, willing to influence and change unfavourable attitude of the society towards women politicians, have taken the initiative in the leadership of non-governmental organizations.

Women members of parliament, seeking to eliminate causes of gender inequality and striving to encourage women to take a more active participation in public and political performance, organized several events in 2003. For example, Birutė Vėsaitė and Giedrė Purvaneckienė offered themselves to work in the Maxima and Iki supermarkets during the festivals. The parliament members with the help of the event tried to get the attention of the government that women in the labour market are not only discriminated against but also exploited. In addition to this, the member of parliament Birutė Vėsaitė developed a project, Bitė (The Bee), where she suggested assigning a half of the positions in the Seimas for women and registered the project in the Seimas for discussion. In this way, on the basis of this project, there should be not 10 or 20 but 70 or 71 woman parliament members, as there are 141 parliament members in all.

Alongside changes in Lithuanian society, making it more modern, the number of women competing with men increases as well. More and more often women seek the highest positions of the state. Also at present women's influence in political life of the country is increasing. In 2008, Dalia Grybauskaitė was elected president by 80% of the electorate. However, this speaks of the growing importance of competence, and not necessarily gender.

In September 2009, Irena Degutienė, a member of the Christian-Democrats party, was elected the speaker of the 10th Seimas. The position of Minister of National Defence is held by a member of the same party, Rasa Juknevičienė. Hence, Lithuanian society has an opportunity to consider whether the presence of three women in high positions is an accident or a result of the society's maturity in respect of gender equity. An answer to this question is not yet available, and can be found only in the course of political development. At the moment some political scientists claim that women's presence in the highest national positions is a result of the difficult economic situation in the country. According to them, historically, women can deliberately, without panic, make the right decisions in difficult situations. There is the hope that women's power and influence in legislation will manage to find the way from the current financially and economically complicated situation. Perhaps they will even diminish the level of corruption.

The labour market and women

Since the 1990's when the capitalist labour market was established in Lithuania, many difficulties in gender relationship connected with labour have reappeared. The first problem was the differential valuation of different kinds of work. Men and women have always worked, but accessible work and the payment for that work depended on the division into male and female works. Even now distinct differences, in valuing male and female jobs in the society, remain.

Gender inequality exists all over the world. The Institute of Equal Opportunity Development in Vilnius reports the following: globally, women own less than 2% of the land, comprise 14,5% of the members of national parliaments, get 73% of the man's salary for the same work on average. Lithuania is not an exception. In Lithuania women earn a fifth less than men; it can be concluded that gender inequality is rooted in

Lithuania's social and economic system. Although women's participation in the labour market amounts to 60%, and the rate of their unemployment is lower than men's, women's poverty level is higher than that of men's.

Based on the data of the national Statistics Department, a risk of being below the poverty line is actually 21% for women and 16.7% for men. This is undoubtedly related to lower salaries for the same work and the lack of social guarantees. However, women in Lithuania are often not active fighters for their rights. When speaking about the reasons for women's discrimination the labour market, Margarita Jankauskaitė, a project manager of the Center for Equal Opportunity Development pointed out that although women comprise the majority of the population, they do not have influence on legislation. She emphasized that women's efficiency in the labour market cannot be maximized because they are responsible for social reproduction, for example, care for children and other dependents, and housework. This responsibility has been formed by long-lasting cultural norms, which also determines that women are not that much sought after in the labour market; they have more difficulties in finding a well-paid job; their career opportunities are limited.

Margarita Jankauskaitė indicated that women work in those fields that are less well paid. According to her, there is labour market segregation as well. On the one hand, there is horizontal segregation when women assemble in particular economic spheres. In this respect, Lithuania is among the most segregated countries in the EU. This is very important because this determines employers' assumptions that "female jobs" can be paid less, and this practice has become a norm. According to Vaida Lisauskaitė, in some fields, strong horizontal segregation of the labour market can be observed: men dominate the "male" sectors of construction (92.8%), transport (71.9%), agriculture (62.8%), women – the "female" ones of healthcare (85.5%), education (81.9%), hotel and restaurants (81.1%), social services (66.5%). Therefore, a part of unqualified women beside their full-time job have an extra part-time blue-collar job, for example, that of a cleaner in order to earn the same as a man in one position.

Based on employment data, in 2008 the employment rate of women aged 15-64 years old amounted to 61.8% and that of men – 67.1%. In particular, the employment of older women (55-64 years old) is different from that of men of that age. Women's unemployment rate was higher than men's in 1998, but in 2006 it decreased and in 2008 was just 0.4% higher than men's. Women's unemployment rate then was 5.6%, and that of men – 6%.

Lisauskaitė states that “women with higher education constitute 17.6% of all the unemployed women. Among men, this figures amounts to 10.9%. Besides, women comprise 60% of all people with higher education, the majority of which is among young public servants (80%). In further analysis of professions, the percentage of women constitute 66-67% of the group of specialists, junior specialists and technical staff, 56.2% of the blue-collar employees, 23.4% of qualified labour force. Meanwhile, in the category of senior officials and managers they amount to 40.2%”. According to the sociologist, statistical data provide evidence on the phenomenon of the glass ceiling, when, disregarding equality laws, employers or societal stereotypical attitudes to women, they are more rarely offered a leading position. Thus, men are career-oriented employees and women are “just employees”. Even in the so-called female-dominated spheres women comprise a minority in the leading positions. In 2007, 81.9% of the employees in the education sector were women: 87% in high school, and 48.5% in universities, but none of Rectors of the higher education institutions was female.

On the other hand, child care and other family duties which make woman less mobile in the labour market fall into the category of vertical segregation. Laws in Lithuania protect women who take maternity leave. A position has to be secured for her until she comes back to work. However, it is a public secret that there are many cases where a woman who held a position of department head, takes maternity leave and when she returns to work she is just happy to get any position in that department. Presently, when the economic situation is complicated, many women are happy in general to have a job. This is because of the divergence between law and practice. It can happen that while a woman is on maternity leave her male colleague is promoted up to her position, and woman's work life becomes an analogy to the players who entered an unlucky square on the ‘snakes and ladders’ board, and is returned her to the start again.

Tenure in companies can usually explain differences in salary. In Lithuania, the longer the tenure, the bigger gap between the genders. The starting position is the same, yet after 15-20 years one can see that men's salaries are higher than those of women. There is the difference in salary in respect of education as well. In the blue-collar sector the difference in salaries between men and women is small, yet it becomes bigger in the white-collar sector. The same situation applies to the groups of young and older people. With age, the difference in men's and women's salaries becomes larger. Genders compare their achievements or failures with those of a representative of the same

gender, but rarely are achievements in a definite economic sector compared disregarding gender.

The research report “Woman in the Lithuanian Society, 2009” conducted by Purvaneckienė, a professor at Vilnius University, reveals changes which took place in Lithuania during the 15 years of independence. Purvaneckienė compared the results of research in 2009 to that from 1994. She notes in the report that values in the Lithuanian society remain unchanged, i.e. family and work are mentioned as the core ones in both researches. Yet, some changes are taking place: the evaluation of the importance of work is higher; friends are gaining importance, and the significance of family, policy and religion is decreasing. In 1994 71% of the women respondents and 57% of the men respondents considered family important; in 2009 its importance decreased to 66% and 53% respectively. The importance of work to women has grown from 42% in 1994 to 49% in 2009; to men from 41% to 50%. According to the research findings of 1994, friends were of significance to 18% of women and 19% of men; in 2009 23% of both women and men. The role of religion decreased from 23% to 20% women and from 9% to 6% men. Women’s interest in politics dropped from 4% to 3%, and men’s from 12% to 5%.

Work is important to men of employable age. Family is considered a value by women of all age groups. Leisure and friends dominate amongst young people, and religion with politics amongst older people. The findings reveal a stereotypical opinion that men appreciate a job which allows them to earn well and get promoted, and women a job that allows spare more time for the family, helping others and maintaining relations with friends and relatives. There was an assumption that this is the reason why they choose the fields of medicine and education as a profession. Yet, this research indicates that people’s priorities are different.

Women rate their career much higher than the possibility to communicate with people and maintain social relations. Although the possibility to balance work and family is still important to women, a good salary has become the most important value. It is important to 40% women and 50% men. The possibility to develop a career is regarded as important to 12% of women and 19% of men; the possibility to balance work and family 24% and 19% respectively, and the possibility to help others 9% and 8% respectively.

In the light of this, Purvaneckienė claims that the policy of equal opportunity in Lithuania is successful and provides the following argument: compared to 1994, in 2000 the events of discrimination, violence and sexual harassment became rarer. It can be assumed that the national programmes of equal opportunities, changes in the law, and the activity of the Equal Opportunities office have made a great impact.

Conclusions

Women's influence in political life of the country is increasing. The relationship between genders in labour market is changing in comparison with the situation in the 1990's. At the beginning of the 21st century women's attempts to occupy well paid jobs and high positions can be observed. Previous social roles do not satisfy women any more. Most of the problems arise in this respect in the labour market, including unequal salaries, differential valuation of work, and sexual harassment.

At the end of the 20th century and the beginning of 21st century, women's rights have been further developed. Moreover, mechanisms protecting these rights have been created, which must help in implementing equality of men and women. The first woman was elected as the President of the Republic in the national elections of May 2009. Gender discrimination has been regarded as a violation of human rights only, i.e. certain restrictions of women's or men's rights or giving priority to a particular gender. However, gender discrimination is not a violation of human rights only. The price of discrimination to an individual, society, state is much higher still.

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The Dynamics of Gender and Leadership in Non-Governmental Organizations: The case of Cluj-Napoca

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An overview on the debate concerning gender and leadership in organizations

This paper is concerned with the study of gender differences in the leadership style within non-governmental organizations. In the literature there is an ongoing debate concerning this issue. On the one hand there is an active body of research that studies the impact that women have on different sorts of institutions. The feminist scholars argue that the rise in the number of women would determine a better quality of deliberation and of the decision making process, a higher degree of political legitimacy and a development of leadership capacity (Lovenduski 2004). Moreover, given the particularity of women's experiences, they will employ a leadership style that tends to be more collaborative and less competitive. Keiser's study even demonstrates how passive or descriptive representation (greater number of women in leadership positions) can lead to active representation (gender sensitive policies and a different leadership style employed by women) (Keiser 2002).

On the other hand Rosabeth Kanter tends to impose a more structural view on this discussion stating that differences in leadership style belong to the structure of the institution and not to the individual characteristics of men and women (Kanter 1977). Joan Acker will introduce the concept of *gendered institution* 20 years later which claims that disadvantages, exploitation and control, actions, emotions, meanings and identity are shaped through the masculine/feminine dichotomy (Acker 1999). The feminist authors also describe what predominantly masculine organizations are. They are based on two features: hierarchy and difference. Difference means that women's attributes and femininity are clearly defined and differentiated by what is masculine at the conceptual and practical level. Hierarchy means that men and masculinity are

always positively evaluated compared to women (Grunberg 2004). In a masculine organization the attributions are clearly ascribed and the values held by men and women differ systematically. By contrast a feminine organization is regarded as having a more informal character, less bureaucracy and reliance on formal procedures, as well as an overlap of men's and women's prerogatives.

If we are to summarize this discussion we can say that one way to look at the gendered character of the organizations was to see how many women and men are there and to assess women's contribution compared to men's. On the other hand, the structural theorists claim that we should differentiate between the sex composition and the gender order of an organization. The gender order is a process through which organizations are considered more fitted for women or for men. Sometimes the sex composition and gender order overlap and sometimes not. From this perspective gender differences appear as something embedded and reproduced by the subjects that enter the organization. Given this framework it is worth mentioning that the research design was more inspired by the first perspective, namely the one that emphasized the impact that women have on institutions.

Feminist Perspective on Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe

After adopting this general framework another aspect that influenced my research was the local and regional context and the feminist scholarship on civil society in Eastern and Central Europe. From their point of view the civil society is a dynamic and diverse space and differs from one post communist society to another. Many areas of political action and activity were labelled as masculine or feminine. The political decision making area, represented by the parliament and the government is considered masculine and the civil society was defined as feminine. This division between national politics and organization's politics is the result of the assumptions about gender differences that are currently in place. Since the feminine is always devalued compared to the masculine, the NGOs are seen in the Romanian public discourse as weak, powerless and unprofessional (Grünberg 2004). At the same time a greater number of women got involved in these organizations, both at the decision making level and as volunteers compared to the number of women that got involved in other political institutions. The way in which the civil society space was shaped produced a limitation of women's possibilities of defining themselves as social agents and citizens because the

organizations and activities in which they were involved were imposed and created by the society's need to cover the dissolution of the welfare states during communist times. They were directed in the areas of responsibility and care from which the state withdrew and for this reason their activity is devalued (Grünberg 2004). These are some of the conclusions of the researchers who studied the manifestation of gender in civil society post 1989.

Methodological influences: Hofstede's study

For the methodological part of my research I was inspired both by these accounts of the feminist researchers and also by Geert Hofstede's study called: *Culture's Consequences. Comparing Values, Behaviours, Institutions and Organizations across Nations* which I considered an interesting and challenging point of departure in this research. It offers a good example of how gender prescribed norms act and shape the leadership style. From his extensive study on men and women employees' attitudes concerning work, the "masculinity dimension" was the one that drew my attention. This was obtained by measuring the work goal importance in IBM employees from 53 countries and three regions comprised in the study (Hofstede 2001). The work goal importance was obtained by comparing men and women in the same occupations, under certain conditions: being performed by both men and women in sufficient numbers and not being subject to internal division of labour in which women still performed tasks different from men (Hofstede 2001). Across the nine occupations that satisfied these criteria the following differences in attitudes between men and women appeared:

More important for men

Advancement

Earnings

Training

up to datedness

More important for women

friendly atmosphere

position security

physical conditions

cooperation

These gender differences were grouped into what was called a social/ego factor. The social/ego factor is translated in the fact that women attached more importance to social goals (**relationships, helping others, physical environment**) while men attached more importance to ego goals: **careers and money** (Hofstede 2001). The scores on this factor varied across countries and across occupations. Initially the author saw as a possible explanation for this the fact that women are engaged predominantly in certain occupations and men in others. Nevertheless, even in occupations considered as belonging to the social side, like head office clerks for example, having mostly women employed, as compared to an occupation on the ego side like branch office manager with less than 10% women employed, women scored considerably more on the social side than men inside the same occupation (Hofstede 2001). However, across occupations, female system engineers considered an occupation from the ego side had lower social scores than male clerks. So, occupation differences were more important than differences between men and women in the same occupation. The score obtained by each country on this factor was converted into a Country Masculinity Index. Japan is on top, followed by Austria, Switzerland and Germany, the Caribbean Latin American countries (Venezuela, Mexico and Columbia) and the Anglo-Saxon countries (United States, Great Britain and Canada) which also scored above average. The feminine side harbours Latin Countries (France, Spain). At the extreme feminine pole are the Nordic Countries (Sweden, Norway and Denmark) (Hofstede 2001). There are two advantages for employing a feminine leadership style considers the author. The first rests in the type of organizational culture that emerges and the second concerns the type of management that it is employed. The second one is mirrored in the most recent directions in management studies which stress the importance of the manager to embody both types of roles. In Hofstede's study, women are found better equipped than men to balance the two sides of the manager's nature, meaning being preoccupied by work performance and people they work with. He mentions an in depth interview with 22 female and 18 male managers which found that women stressed job and people aspects as interdependent whereas men saw them as being in opposition. As for the first advantage concerning the organizational culture, a survey made among male and female managers in Australia, Norway, Sweden and USA found that on average, men stressed goal setting more and women stressed interaction and facilitation more (Hofstede 2001). As a consequence it is considered that the entry of more women on management jobs would make the organization more responsive and with more open communication climates.

Highlighting the Main Research Directions

Having in mind this research I designed a research that developed in the environment of non-governmental organizations from Cluj-Napoca. The town is one of the largest in Romania, located in the northwestern part, in Transylvania. The economy can be described as vibrant, Cluj-Napoca being considered an important industrial, financial and IT centre. It also has a rich associational life, the largest number of registered NGOs (when Bucharest is excluded), around 3,000, and the highest proportion of NGOs, members and volunteer members per capita among Romanian towns (Bucharest included) (Badescu 2006).

My approach was mainly exploratory and descriptive. Following Hofstede's research and results I wanted to see if his findings on the values and strategies of men and women employees are relevant to the case I study. My research question concerned the type of gender relations developed inside these organizations and also possible differences between the two organizations concerning the leadership style. In the end I was hoping to say a few things about the gender regime of the organization and also the kind of gender relations that are in place. My hypothesis was that given the different composition of the leadership in the two organizations there will be differences concerning the leadership style in the organizations studied.

The two non-governmental organizations that I investigated, one with a mixed leadership and one with an exclusively female leadership were suitable for this research. Both organizations meet the criteria described in Hofstede's study namely to have both men and women performing the same tasks in the same organization or occupation. I designed my research tools bearing in mind the research questions. My study is a qualitative one and I opted to conduct structured interviews with open ended questions. The interview guide was structured in two sections: one that contained questions about the organization's profile, membership, organizational structure and main projects. I considered this introductory part useful, informative and helpful for my analysis. In the second part I formulated questions that would capture the social ego/dimension from Hofstede's study, namely the strategies employed for the achievement of tasks, what they appreciate more about their working environment and what they would advise others in the same position to do in order to achieve their goals. I wanted to make a comparison between responses received from the two organizations in terms of values

and working strategies of the informants. Concerning the research approach, I tried to engage in a collaborative or action research with the participants. By the end of the research we exchanged ideas about their work and I presented them my research purpose and perspective. Following the research I went on to transcribe and analyse the interviews, as well as to develop categories useful for the comparison I intended to make. After finishing most of the work I had a mixed feeling of fulfilment and sorrow for not being able to capture more complex aspects concerning the processes that were going on in the organization. Having said all that, I will present the findings as well as some of the processes that could be deduced from them.

A short description of the two organizations studied

I will begin this section by presenting a few general facts about the organization's formation and structure and also about my experience during the research.

The first organization contacted, called The Romanian Institute for Action, Research and Training for Peace (PATRIR) was founded in 2001 by a man and two women from Canada and Romania. Their main goal is to promote the peaceful transformation of conflicts as well as the prevention of all forms of violence both in Romania and internationally. The organization statement is to promote: "a democratic and participative way of involving their members through action, education, research and dissemination of information." It has a formal structure composed of the General Assembly that meets every year. This body appoints the Council of Directors and the Executive Director. They have a few centres formed around the projects they developed. Each centre has a program coordinator who is responsible for the projects and for the team they coordinate. Nevertheless in this organization the initiative and participation from the part of the members is also encouraged and they have the freedom to propose projects shaping in this way the profile of the organization. Each program coordinator is a team member in another project. This is an important aspect because in this way people have the chance to switch roles and to perform a diversity of tasks. As we can see the organization has a bureaucratic structure but it is not excessively formalized and the atmosphere is a relaxed and welcoming one. When you enter the organization you get the impression that you are visiting friends and you feel almost immediately included.

The second organization is called The Association for the Development of Critical Thinking in Students through Reading and Writing. The members are mostly from academia willing to develop critical thinking of students. The main goal of the organization is to form persons capable to think critically and to be creative, responsible and well prepared to contribute to the community's well being. At the time of the interview they were determined to develop a coherent organizational structure and to offer a permanent training service of high quality. The decisions are adopted democratically in the organization. Since they did not have an office it was a bit more difficult to notice the atmosphere and social interactions that were going on. Nevertheless from the informant's description they seem to have a democratic way of making decisions and people participate out of commitment.

Employing a Feminine Leadership Style. A Surprising Finding

From the first organization I spoke with two persons, a man and a woman, who are both program coordinators and have their own coordinating teams. They were in a decision making position and therefore suitable for my interview. The first person interviewed is a Project manager for Moldova Transnistria Centre. The second interviewee, a woman, is program coordinator for the Gender Centre for Equality and Consciousness Raising. From the second organization I interviewed a woman who is a member in the Executive Council and who is responsible for the organization's newsletter and advocacy. She is also a project coordinator for the Youth Parliament. She characterizes herself as being more democratic than authoritative. For example, she has been in the Executive Council for four years and always advanced an idea not by using her position but by relying on the strength of her arguments.

For the analysis of the interviews I grouped the answers into three categories: motivation, environment description and strategies. They are presented in the table below:

| | First interviewee | Second interviewee | Third interviewee |
|--------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Motivation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work experience; - the network of professional contacts; - good international connections of the organization; - support in career | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - belief in the organization's mission; - personal and professional development; - carry on researches; - contribute to the changing of mentalities and of power relations; - personal and professional fulfilment; - sense of self worth; - personal and professional advancement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - opportunity to manifest and to develop herself; - attachment to the organization's statement |
| Environment description | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - flexible and independent; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - less hierarchical and network oriented; - stimulating | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - flexibility; - independence in choosing the projects |
| Strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - creative approach both/and; - concentrating on goals, accommodate staff needs with beneficiaries needs; - providing support for staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - generate involvement and attachment to the project; - facilitate communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establish who's responsible; - evaluating your availability as honestly and realistically as possible |

After organizing information in this way, it is possible to draw some conclusions about the atmosphere in the organization and the type of leadership style that is employed. The informants hold values and use strategies that would fit a more feminine leadership style. Although references to career, advancement and training are present they seem truly dedicated and less interested in the financial aspect, at least at that point. If we are to interpret our findings from the framework created by Geert Hofstede we can say that the first interviewee appreciates from the point of view of the working environment: getting work experience, the network of professional contacts, good international connections of the organization, flexibility, independence, working with

open-minded people, feeling connected. The working strategies he mentioned as being the most important are: goal setting, consensus seeking, providing support, and sharing the task. By comparison, the next interviewee appreciates at the working environment attachment to the organization's mission, a sense of personal and professional fulfillment, flexibility, the possibility to express and apply original ideas. The working strategies: generating involvement and participation of the team members, communication, providing support, professional advancement. If we compare the responses we see that they appear somehow similar as far as the working strategies are concerned although from the first informant we can notice a slight balance to masculine values since he sees working in the organization more like a career opportunity. In the same time, the second informant appreciates more the quality of the working environment and the organization's profile. Their main motivation seems to reside in what the organization offers in terms of working environment and career opportunities. Nevertheless the order in which they mention these characteristics is different. For the first interviewee aspects related to career opportunities seem to come first while for the second they come after the good working environment. The third person interviewed for the research, the one that belongs to an organization that has an exclusive female leadership, mentions for the working environment: flexibility, the possibility to develop and manifest her interests, the organization's mission. As the working strategies: facilitating communication, democratic decision making, following the rules, ascribing responsibilities. In this case the quality of the working environment seems to come first while career and advancement issues seem to occupy a less important place in the interviewee's priorities. This phenomenon can be due to the differences between the two organizations. In the first case the persons were full time employees while in the second organization the person is involved on a voluntary basis and performs the job mostly in her free time. Her working strategies as well as her motivations and goals have more feminine characteristics.

Considering now the two organizations it can be said that their members exhibit both resemblances and differences. The resemblances are contained in the interviewees' values, namely in what they appreciate more in the organization. Women from both organizations mentioned the working environment as the main reason for getting involved. It can mean that they hold a set of values and strategies that are more close to the feminine leadership style. The differences reside mostly in the amount of information that is given. The interviewees from the first organization provided more detailed information and this allowed a better assessment of their values and working

strategies. In the second case, the information was less detailed and some aspects were more difficult to investigate especially the ones referring to the strategies employed in the work place.

The research, although limited to only two organizations, shows that members from both organizations hold similar values concerning the working environment as well as the working strategies that they use. The motivation for getting involved in the organization is somehow similar. Overall they seem to exhibit a leadership style that contains more feminine characteristics. Not even in the organization that has a mixed leadership the situation is dramatically different although we would expect to find at least a small difference.

Concluding remarks and concerns

After presenting the research on the two organizations, with its premises and results, two main inquiries came up and I will briefly discuss them. This first question concerned the way I constructed the interview guide. It is well known that the way in which questions are formulated is important for getting the answers needed and at the same time to avoid getting socially desirable answers. I admit that this is an aspect that shouldn't be overlooked and one way to avoid this rests on how the questions are formulated. Of course, while constructing the interview guide I had this aspect in mind so the questions were encouraging respondents to describe a situation or aspect in their own words and the open ended questions can provide this. Also, during the interview attention was paid to corporal gestures, tone of voice, etc. and this can also give clues to the respondent's honesty. Besides this I think more important is, during a research, and the feminist scholarship emphasises this, to disclose your purpose and to give something back to the respondents, so that the research will be a mutual advantage to both parties involved.

As to the second question that came up, this raised the issue of the type of organization that has been studied and if the results could have been influenced by it. It is well known that NGOs were formed on voluntary and non profit basis and from this perspective their members are somehow different in their expectations and motivations from employees of companies or firms that were founded for profit purposes. Nevertheless, as concerns the gender regimes of NGOs, they seem to reproduce the

traditional gender models in which the leadership positions are dominated by men. Nevertheless, there are many powerful NGOs run by women so a definitive conclusion cannot be drawn (Grünberg 2004). These aspects call for further investigation for a better understanding of this phenomenon. These two organizations exhibit many characteristics resembling a feminine leadership style from the aesthetic of the organization to the type of relations that is instituted and the tasks performed. On the other hand, we have to take into consideration that these are only two organizations from the whole NGO sector and that the NGOs themselves are only a small part of the public sphere. Therefore the research should be oriented toward investigating the NGO sector as well as the governmental sector and what strategies should be employed in order to get more open and diverse institutional climates.

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- Simona Bernat, interviewed on 16th of June 2006, Cluj – Napoca. Program Director.

Appendix

Q.1 When was the organization founded?

Q.2. What's the organization's structure?

Q.3. How many women are in leadership positions in your organization?

Q.4. What is your position inside the organization?

Q.5. What motivated you to join the organization?

Q.6. What do you see as a benefit or advantage from working here?

Q.7. The organization or the team you are coordinating has to decide on an issue. You are convinced that your solution is the right one but your colleagues or team members aren't convinced about this? What do you do?

Q.8. What do you do if you have to perform a task and your team members are not doing their part?

Q.9. What do you appreciate more about your work?

Q.10. What would you advise people in your position to do in order to be successful?

Women's Access to Senior Management Positions in the University of Abuja, Nigeria

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Introduction

Some views seem established from decades of research on women in higher education management. They include the following:

- Women are fewer in number than men in senior academic and administrative positions in the academic world.
- An established patriarchal culture in the academic world prevents women from climbing the ladder to senior positions.

Some other views seem to be emerging recently. These conclusions are that:

- Years of equal opportunity rule, affirmative action strategy and anti-discrimination legislation in favour of women have failed to deliver the desired rise in hierarchy for female academics. However, universities where female academics achieve senior positions evidence the existence of some supportive characteristics.

The main objective of the present study is to evaluate the commitment of the University of Abuja to the goal of gender equality in appointments to senior management positions.

The secondary objectives are:

- To determine from sex disaggregated data progress made in the University to address the issue of under-representation of women in senior management positions, and

- To research the perceptions of females in senior management positions in the University towards the existence of any barriers against women's advancement in the institution

The relevance of this study is perhaps underscored by the fact that recently the Nigerian federal government has been scaling up its effort towards meeting the goals of gender equality with the introduction of a National Gender Policy in 2006 and the Strategic Implementation Framework for the Policy in 2008. One of the stated objectives of the National Gender Policy is to “achieve minimum threshold of representation for women in order to promote equal opportunity in all areas of political, social, economic life of the country for women, as well as for men.” (NGP 20) The Policy recommends adopting special measures, quotas and mechanisms for achieving the threshold by pursuing 35% affirmative action in favour of women to bridge gender gaps in political representation in both elective and appointive posts at all levels. (NGP 20) The Framework recognises that the implementation of the Policy demands advice from specialised national institutions like universities, and requires such institutions to develop gender policies and management systems to engender their processes, including recruitment, training, decision-making and representation in senior positions.

Literature review

I will review the literature on women in higher education management based on three issues or themes: namely, Under-representation of Women in Senior Academic Management Positions, Patriarchy in Universities, and Gender Equality in University Management.

Under-representation of women in senior academic management positions

According to a UNESCO-Commonwealth report on women in higher education management, the global picture is one of men outnumbering women about five to one at middle management and about twenty to one at senior management level. Women deans and professors are a minority group and women vice-chancellors and presidents are rare (Dines 1993). A follow-up survey in 2000 by the Association of Commonwealth

Universities (ACU) entitled, “Still a Single Sex Profession? Female Staff Numbers in Commonwealth Universities,” states that at the middle management level, men outnumbered women at about ten to one. Women vice-chancellors, deans and professors were still a rarity (Jobbins 2006).

In 1985 the Association of Commonwealth Universities began a “Women's Programme” to facilitate the development of women in Commonwealth universities so that they can use their academic, administrative and management skills in contributing to the institutional development of universities. The programme arose in response to the recognition of the extent women were under-represented at senior levels in the Commonwealth university sector. It was inspired by ACU's concern with equity and enhancement of the participation of women in development; and secondly, concern with the issues of educational access and quality pertaining to higher education. The organisation considers the improved recruitment of women into all levels of management in higher education as integral to the overall development of the institutions in terms of both equity and quality. (Association of Commonwealth Universities 2005)

The under representation of women in the management of higher educational institutions in Nigeria was the focus of a round table organised in May 2008 by Accessure Educational and Goethe-Institute Lagos. The forum provided an opportunity for women in notable positions in the Nigerian university system to share their experience and discuss how to raise the number of women in key positions in higher education, how successful female academics achieved their current positions and whether there were typical feminine social and management qualities that could be beneficial to the whole sector.

Participants observed that there is gender discrimination, which is often subtle and systemic. Though no policy statements discriminate against women, they noted, yet academia has long been dominated by men, and the male perspective in policy development, performance evaluation, and interpersonal interactions generally prevail. The group said women's classroom performance was often evaluated more critically than men's and that research by women or about women was frequently undervalued by male colleagues. Initial salary differentials between men and women increase in favour of men and women take two to ten years longer than men to be promoted. The group recommended that obstacles in institutions that prevent women from achieving

their full potentials should be removed and that formal and informal policies which would encourage women to function optimally should be adopted and enforced.

Other recommendations are that, institutions should address inequities in hiring, promotion, tenure, and salaries of women academics; there should exist on-campus childcare facilities; successful female academics should mentor young and aspiring colleagues; scholarship should be provided to bright female scholars and grants to female researchers; there should be increased enrolment of the girl-child into tertiary institutions; women should embrace new technologies in their research and teaching, and women's achievement should be celebrated for their motivation. (This Day 2008)

Evidence from literature generally indicates that women academics are under-represented in senior management positions in most universities around the world. In most cases, women only account for a minority of staff and are concentrated in the lower grades. Statistical evidence points to the fact that one reason for this situation is that discrimination exists in the academic profession.

Patriarchy in universities

Scholars in the UK, the USA, Australia and Canada have carried out volumes of studies on women in higher education in which they have addressed the issues of paucity of women in senior academic positions. In analysing the factors that prevent women from reaching the apex of the academic career, metaphors of "glass ceiling" (Hansard Society 1990; Davidson & Cooper 1992; Hede 1994), "brick wall" (Bacchi 1993), "stone floor" (Heward 1994), "blocked pipeline" (Keohane 2003), and "maternal wall" (Williams 2004) have been used. Luke (2001: 6) observes that despite years of affirmative action and the passing of statutes outlawing sexual discrimination (USA and UK in 1972; Australia in 1984), "the rate at which women have ascended academic career ladders in these countries is maddeningly slow". Women in the United Kingdom constitute 7-8 percent of the professoriate, in Ireland just over 5 percent, in the United States 16 percent of those with full professorial status and in Finland 18 percent (O'Connor 2000). Luke (2001: 10) thus refers to universities as: "a hotbed of both vertical and horizontal sex segregation."

In a study, Forster (2001) reports on the views that women academics have about their career prospects, equal opportunities and the conflicts they experience between their

work and personal lives in one UK University. The university in question has formal equal opportunities policies and gender monitoring systems in place. However, very few women have progressed into senior academic roles. They continue to be handicapped by well-ingrained structural and cultural barriers and by promotion systems that still largely rely on the publication records of candidates for appointments and promotions. Some of the women interviewed reported that they had opted to put their careers on hold because of domestic and family responsibilities. A few have resigned themselves to never achieving senior positions because of these commitments. The study observes that the trend may have a negative impact on recruiting women graduates into careers in higher education in the future.

A study to explore how women academics view their professional advancement at a higher education institution in South Africa found that women within higher education institutions felt isolated, alienated, and their ideas unheard. (Butler 2005) Similarly, being ignored, excluded, regarded as 'light weight', and receiving unequal treatment were the recurring themes in interviews with women in a study on "Women in the Professoriate in Australia." White (2001) concludes from the study that the academia remains a hostile work environment for senior women. One of the important challenges for women in the professoriate in Australia, the study says, is to impact on the highly masculinist culture of higher education. "You are just sort of ignored, very pleasantly, but you are not part of the male culture." (White 2000: 7-10). White (2001) observes that it would appear that once women reach senior levels in any organization they encounter the power of the male hegemony that is prepared to accommodate some women, but not to have their dominance challenged. Thornton comments that this structural discrimination is a corollary of any hierarchical and bureaucratised organization, since the *raison d'être* of bureaucracy is to maintain the status quo, including the power of existing elites" (Thornton 1996: 290).

Although most literature point to an established patriarchal culture in the academic world, there are, however, a few exceptions. For instance, respondents in a study conducted in Ankara University, one of Turkey's foremost universities, said there is no gender discrimination in both academic promotion and management in the University. The study by Ozkanli and Korkmaz (2000) measured the attitude towards gender discrimination in academic promotion and administration in Ankara University. The study asked respondents: "Do you think being a woman is an advantage for academic administration?" Answers were in three categories: 1) It is an advantage; 2) It is a

disadvantage; 3) There is no discrimination. Most female academics responded that there is no gender discrimination in academic management. Some think that to be a woman is a disadvantage in academic management. A very small minority think that it is an advantage. The study concludes that most female academics in Turkey (67.3 %) think that there is no gender discrimination, and being a woman is far from being an advantage. The ratio of female academics in Ankara University is 42 percent. Another study used in-depth, semi-structured interviews to explore the experiences of women academics at the Rand Afrikaans University, South African. The study found positive and negative experiences. The positive included the lessening of overt discrimination and flexible work hours. The negative included the "double workload" of traditional female duties combined with work life and ambivalent feelings about academia and the stress it causes. (Peterson & Gravett 2000) Nevertheless, Carli (1998: 278-279) observes that it very often happens that when women have encountered discrimination within the university they fail to recognise it, because the university is "perceived as an institution that emphasises objectivity, fairness, the pursuit of knowledge, and merit as a basis for evaluation". Consequently, women who experience discrimination may not only fail to recognise it, but will come up with some explanation for differential treatment and thereby deny the existence of discrimination at all.

Gender equality in university management

Lorber (1994:200) defines gender equality as meaning:

"...that women and men of all races would have the same opportunities to obtain professional credentials and occupational training, and would be distributed in the same proportions as they are in the paid work force across workplaces, job titles, occupations, and hierarchical positions".

According to Luke and Gore (1992: 203, quoted in Butler 2005: 1) "... equality of rights (to speak and be heard), access (to positions of power, resources) and representation (on boards and committees, etc) ... has not been achieved (in the academic context)". Davies, Lubelska and Quinn (1994: 10) note that despite equal opportunities policies, most women continue to feel disadvantaged and oppressed in relation to their prospects, representation and needs within higher education.

Since the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the call for gender equality has been much louder. A review of the Beijing conference in 2000 showed that while there is increasing political, constitutional and legal support for achieving gender equality, there are still major gaps in all sectors and in every region of the world. The 2002 report of the Progress of the World's Women notes that women make up less than 5 percent of the world's heads of state, heads of major corporations and top positions in international organisations. The report concludes that despite some improvements in the previous two decades, women's achievements still lag far behind those of men in terms of power, wealth, decision-making and opportunity.

The persisting gap has increased the focus on women's access to, and participation in governance. It is now generally accepted that unless women constitute a "critical mass" of at least one third of those in decision-making, their mere presence makes little difference to the outcomes of governance. Thus, there are attempts to achieve targets of one third of women in decision making, as well as efforts to remove institutional barriers to the effective participation of women, such as more family friendly work practices. A growing body of literature suggests that, where women are present in critical numbers and are able to participate effectively, the result is more socially responsive governance outcomes.

Nigeria's National Gender Policy notes that gender inequality within the overall society, and across all sectors, reflect the wide disparities between women and men. For example, 76% of the Federal Civil Service workers are men, while women make up 24% and occupy less than 14% of the overall management positions (NGP 7-8). A World Bank report on Nigerian universities reveals that women form a minority of university teachers and female academic staff stagnate at a level of about 14 percent.

Development imperatives, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality, support the goal of gender equality. The commitment of African governments to gender equality is equally expressed in the African Charter on human and People's Rights (ACHPR), adopted in 1981 and its Women's Rights Protocol of 2003; the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance 2001; and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) adopted in 2001. Gender equality is a central issue in international treaties, covenants and declarations because inequality has negative impact on sustainable development and economic growth. In the university system, inequality denies access

to some of the best minds for teaching and research and undermines the academic development of female students who lack female role models and mentors.

Gender mainstreaming, as a redress mechanism, arose from the recognition that gender inequality is so deeply rooted in the behaviour and experiences of people, and in systems, institutions and structures, that a transformation is needed in order to bring about equality. The goal of gender mainstreaming is 'the organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making' (Council of Europe 1998). The factors that facilitate gender mainstreaming have been identified as: Political will (at the top of the organisation); adequate resources; gender-disaggregated statistics; training for civil servants; the development of an infrastructure such as focal points; representation of women in decision-making processes; and openness or transparency in policy-making processes. (Council of Europe 1998; Verloo 1999)

Some findings validate the claim that universities in which female academics achieve senior positions are those in which some supportive practices toward women exist. For instance, Chesterman (2004) sought to verify if five Australian universities where women achieved promotion to, and remained in, senior positions, had particular cultural characteristics that supported and sustained women. Universities around Australia had been encouraged by government equity legislation to adopt a proactive measure towards the promotion of women into senior management. Across all five universities, there was unanimity about the factors that encouraged women to apply for senior positions and that sustained and supported them in those positions. These were clear support from organisational leaders, a critical mass of other women in senior positions, opportunities to network and strong statements on values. Those interviewed indicated that the most significant support was that from the chief executive or the direct superior to the woman. Executives had to go beyond rhetoric, and demonstrate their support of women and equity through endorsement of women's performance, encouragement of women to apply for promotion, and commitment of resources to development, such as training courses. The finding supports research that suggests that organisational leaders, especially the CEO, critically influence an organisation's direction, its performance and its organisational practices (Johnson 2002, qtd in Chesterman 2004). The interviewees also defined the culture that supported women as one with women present in significant numbers and in positions

of significant power. Women in these interviews supported the view that the level at which women were appointed was more important than numerical equality.

Similarly, Switzerland, Germany and Austria each has a national policy for gender equality in higher education that has led to the establishment of organizational and administrative structure – offices that create target programmes and open funding-lines for support of activities in equal opportunities. At La Trobe University Melbourne, Australia, recruitment processes required that at least one female was included on every employment selection panel. The institution's faculty deans were required to ensure that female representation on all major faculty committees was not less than 50%, and that both sexes were represented on all university committees. La Trobe's gender balance of academic staff is similar to that of three other Australian tertiary institutions - the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, the Australian Catholic University and Notre Dame University. In 2007, the proportion of women academics at La Trobe was 49%, with 50 female and 85 male professors. There were 56% to 58% women academics at the three other institutions. More women than men were provided with career development at La Trobe, and the university offered a diploma in university administration that was particularly attractive to women. (Jones, 2007)

Methodology and Findings

In evaluating the commitment of the University of Abuja to the goal of gender equality in appointments to senior management positions, this study set out to accomplish two objectives. These are to determine from sex disaggregated data progress made in the University to address the issue of under-representation of women in senior management positions, and to research the perceptions of females in senior management positions in the University on the existence of any barriers against women's advancement in the institution.

Progress made to address the issue of under-representation of women in senior management positions at the University of Abuja

Sex disaggregated data on membership of the Senate of the University of Abuja in the 2000/2001 and 2008/2009 sessions provide some information on progress made in

the University to address the issue of under-representation of women the in senior management positions.

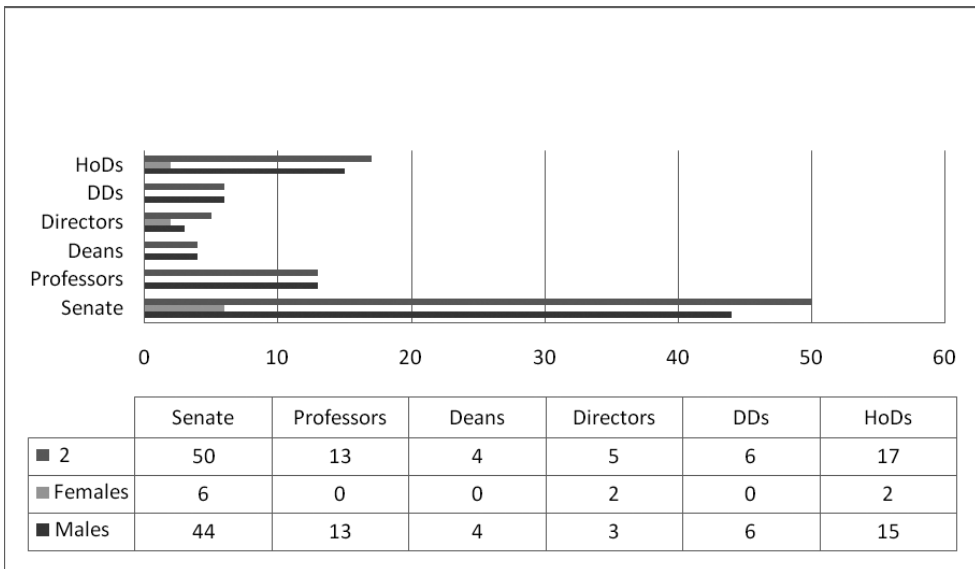


Table 1: University of Abuja Senate membership 2000/2001

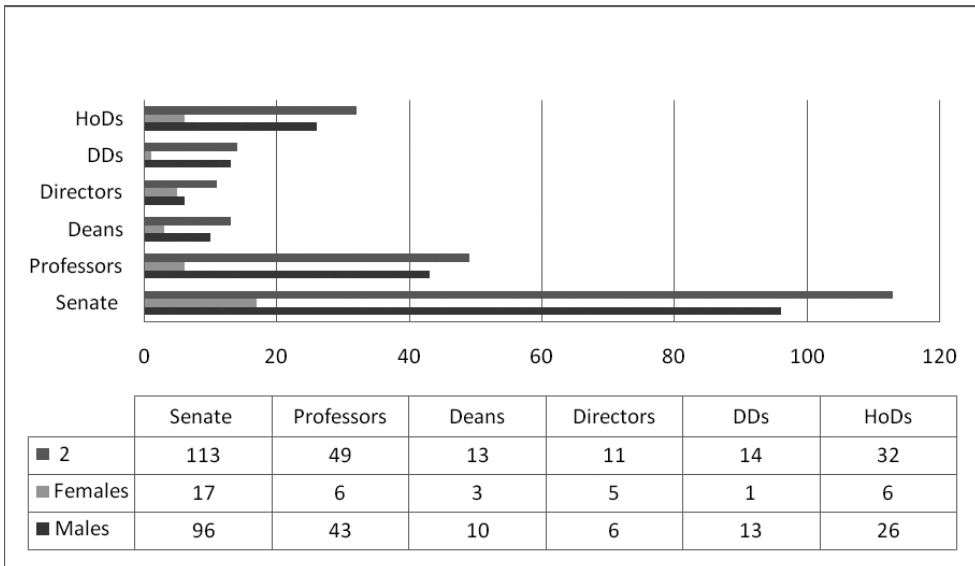


Table 2: University of Abuja Senate membership 2008/2009

As the tables on membership of the Senate of University of Abuja in 2000/20001 and 20008/20009 show, women are under-represented in senior academic and administrative positions. Female Professors, Deans, Deputy Deans and Deputy Directors (DDS) and HoDs are a minority group in the University. Nevertheless, women are not under-represented in the position of Directors. Five of the University's eleven Directors are females.

The key officers and bodies involved in the management of the university are the Governing Council and the Senate, the Vice-Chancellor, Two Deputy Vice-Chancellors (Academic and Administration), the Registrar and secretary of Council, the Bursar, the University Librarian, Deans of Faculties, Directors of Centres and Institutes and Heads of Departments.

The Senate is the forum for the senior academic and administrative hierarchy, and the highest University authority on academic matters. The Senate comprises the Vice-Chancellor as Chairman, the Deputy Vice-Chancellors, the Professors, the University Librarian, Deans, Directors and Deputy Deans, Deputy Directors, heads of academic departments, one member of academic staff representing each Faculty and the Registrar as Secretary.

In 2000/2001, the Vice Chancellor and a Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration) were both females. In 2008/2009, the Vice Chancellor and all two Deputy Vice Chancellors were males. During both periods, men filled the positions of Registrar, Bursar and Librarian.

Eight years ago, in the 2000/2001 academic session, there were 50 Senate members: 44 (88%) were males, while six (12%) were females. Currently there are 113 Senate members: 96 (85%) are males, while 17 (15%) are women. Thus in a period of eight years, the representation of women in the Senate of the University increased only by 3%.

In terms of numerical equality, women lag far behind men in attainment of senior positions at the University of Abuja. Nevertheless, with 23% of Deans and 45% of Directors as females, women may be considered present in significant numbers in those positions. Thus, the visibility accorded females in the University by those high profile positions perhaps accounts for the perception among the interviewees that the institution has a supportive culture toward women.

The perceptions of females in senior management positions about barriers to women's advancement in the institution

To determine the perceptions, I employed the qualitative method that emphasises the importance of direct observation, the value of subjective human interpretation, and the importance of evaluation participants. In eight recorded interactive interviews, lasting an average of 23 minutes each, I sought the responses of eight female academics in senior management positions as Deans, Directors and HoD. I interviewed two out of three female Deans, all five female Directors, and one out of six female HoD's. I considered the purposeful selection as representatives of the widest range of experience of the phenomenon under investigation. The interviews took place between February 10 and March 20, 2009.

With semi-structured questions, I sought to determine if the interviewees knew of any policy driving women's appointment into management positions in the University, in what ways the incumbent VC had encouraged women's participation, whether they share the view that women are faced with a patriarchal culture in the university system that hinders their attainment of senior positions (VC, DVC, Professor, Dean, Director, HoD); and what prejudices or notions they know to pose a discouragement to women's participation in the management of the University. I played the recordings repeatedly in order to extract and present from each interview the substance of the response directly assessing the commitment of the University of Abuja on the points of number of women in senior management positions, incidence of patriarchal culture and policy of gender equality.

My finding does not confirm the view about the existence of a male culture that subverts females' access to management hierarchy in the institution. All but two female interviewees said there was no patriarchal culture hindering the rise of women to senior positions in the university. This evidence does not confirm the time-tested hypothesis on the subject, but validates a more recent hypothesis, namely; that "universities where female academics achieve senior positions evidence the existence of some supportive characteristics." Most of the female interviewees attributed what they considered a favourable status of women at the University of Abuja to the commitment of the serving VC to the principles of gender equity.

Conclusion and recommendations

Numerically, women trail behind men in senior positions in the University of Abuja. With 15% female representation in the management cadre, the university is still a long way from the 35% minimum threshold recommended in the Nigerian gender policy. However, with 23% of Deans and 45% of Directors as females, women are present in significant numbers in those positions. Thus, the perception among the interviewees that the institution has a supportive culture toward women, notwithstanding the numerical imbalance in favour of men, collaborates the finding of Chesterman (2004) in which the women interviewed supported the view that the level at which women were appointed was more important than numerical equality.

Nevertheless, the interviewees in Chesterman's study equally defined the culture that supported women as one with women present in significant numbers as well. The conclusion from this is that the paucity of women in senior positions is indicative of a culture that is unfriendly to women. Why then did most of the female interviewees characterise the university as non-discriminatory towards women despite their inferior number in the top positions? The observation of Carli (1998: 278-279) perhaps explains that trend of response. The researcher notes that usually when women encounter discrimination in the university they fail to recognise it because the university is "perceived as an institution that emphasises objectivity, fairness, the pursuit of knowledge, and merit as a basis for evaluation". As a result, women who experience discrimination may not only fail to recognise it, but will come up with some explanation for differential treatment and thereby deny the existence of discrimination at all.

With the non-existence of a policy for gender equality in the university, the institution may not correctly be described as non-discriminatory towards women. The university happened to have a Vice Chancellor, between June 2004 and June 2009, who was supportive of women's participation in his administration. As research suggests, organisational leaders critically influence an organisation's direction, performance and practices (Johnson 2002, qtd in Chesterman 2004). Nevertheless, this influence may go one way or the other, for or against the inclusion and advancement of women, depending on the orientation of the incumbent chief executive. Thus, in order to make sustained progress in the direction of gender balance, it is desirable for the University of Abuja to formulate and implement a gender equality policy that spells out measurable, attainable goals. Like Switzerland, Germany and Australia, Nigeria should develop a national policy for gender equality in higher education and equally set up

administrative structures or offices that support activities in equal opportunities in the tertiary institutions. Such policy will spell out quota for representation of women in recruitment processes and key faculty and university committees. Policies of equal opportunity, affirmative action and anti-discrimination in favour of women, will likely result in remarkable numerical increase and rise in hierarchy for female academics in institutions where the chief executive is supportive of women.

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**“Men, Masculinities and Leadership”, 20 Years On:
Gender/intersectionalities, local/transnational,
embodied/virtual, theory/practice**

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Dominant non-gendered forms and processes of leadership

Dominant forms and processes of leadership, in theory and practice, have long been seen as “gender-neutral” or implicitly men’s/male. Gendering leadership involves attending to both gender and sexuality, and not only the relation of women to leadership, but also explicitly gendering how men, masculinities and men’s practices relate to leadership. In doing this, there are, however, dangers of returning to an amended version of (male sex) role theory. Instead, “men and leadership” need to put into several intersectional contexts, including the local/transnational, the embodied/virtual, and theory/practice. The historical impetus for seeing (and analysing and changing) leadership through the gender lens has come from women and from the critical assessment of women’s position in organizations, management and leadership. Yet gendering leadership involves attending to the relation of women and leadership, but also explicitly and critically gendering how men, masculinities and men’s practices relate to leadership, in both practice and theory.

Even though the notion of leadership is ambiguous in referring to both leaders, formal and informal, and leadership as process and processes - it is not so surprising that the construction of both leadership and leadership research tends to be highly individualistic – pervaded by what one might call the ideology of leading-ness in leadership ... *and there shall be leaders!* Critiquing this, Amanda Sinclair (2005: 388) has written:

“The bulk of books [on leadership] are righteous and banal, journal articles offer tediously empirical tests of little consequence. Much writing colludes

with the lionization of leadership as a normative performance. Research behaves as if leadership was gendered and disembodied. The infatuation with transformational and inspiring leadership offers little consolation in its tired references to vision and charisma.”

Many studies of leadership have a U.S., Anglo or Western bias, and are highly normative in orientation. At the same time much leadership research has been strangely separate from organizational and management research. In theory and practice, dominant forms and processes of leadership have long been seen as “gender-neutral” or implicitly men’s/male. Most research on leadership remains pre-scientific in its neglect of gender.

Gendering leadership

Gendering leadership involves attending to both gender and sexuality. The relation between women and leadership entails: recognising women’s leadership; stopping the invisibility of women’s leadership; promoting (in both senses) women’s leadership; making clearer women’s relations to leadership; and problematizing “leadership” – whose leadership? But gendering does not only involve the relation of women to leadership. The taken-for-grantedness of most men’s leadership is rife. Gendering men and leadership also involves explicitly gendering how men, masculinities and men’s practices *relate to* leadership. This means noting the relationality to leadership – not leadership as a separate reified thing!

Over twenty years ago in 1988 I was asked to edit a journal special issue on the theme of “Men, masculinities and leadership” (Hearn 1989b). In this issue several key themes were highlighted, including:

- Reinterpreting dominant models of leadership as forms of men’s leadership: traditional, charisma, bureaucratic (Weber 1964);
- Relations of men and leadership within patriarchy;
- Men/masculine-coded language, metaphors and images;
- Styles of “masculine” leadership, and followers’ perceptions of masculinity and leadership;

- Men's organizational cultures;
- Masculine psychodynamics;
- The relation of theory and practice (Hearn, 1989a).

So, what has changed over the last 20 years? In this paper I consider to what extent the relationship of men and leadership, in practice and theory, has changed (if at all?) over the last twenty years. This is especially important as in gendering the relation of men and leadership, there are, however, dangers of returning to an amended version of (male sex) role theory. Over the last twenty or more years, there has been a major growth of critical studies on men and masculinities, on the other. How are we to go beyond the obvious links of leadership and masculinities. In addition, there have been major societal changes, for example, global interconnections, the impact of information and communication technologies (ICTs), and neo-liberalism. Thus contextualizing aspects that now seem much more important than 20 years ago are the relations of men, masculinities and leadership to gendered intersectionalities, the local/the transnational, the embodied/the virtual, and theory/practice.

The uneven impact of critical studies on men and masculinities

The last thirty years have seen a considerable growth of critical studies on men and masculinities. This raises the question of how men and leadership might now be seen and understood. Some of the main features of critical studies on men and masculinities have been summarized as:

- a *specific*, rather than an implicit or incidental, *focus* on the topic of men and masculinities;
- taking account of *feminist, gay, and other critical gender scholarship*;
- attending to the *explicit gendering* of men and masculinities;
- understanding men and masculinities as *socially constructed, produced, and reproduced* rather than as just “naturally” one way or another;

- seeing men and masculinities as *variable and changing* across time (history) and space (culture), within societies, and through life courses and biographies;
- emphasizing men's relations, albeit differentially, to *gendered power*;
- spanning both *the material and the discursive* in analysis;
- interrogating the *intersections of gender with other social divisions* in the construction of men and masculinities (Connell et al. 2005: 3).

One of the most important set of influences on this body of work has come from what may be called "masculinities theory", especially as propounded and developed by Raewyn Connell and colleagues (Carrigan, Connell & Lee 1985). Some of the main features of this approach may be summarized as:

- the critique of sex role theory;
- the use of a power-laden concept of masculinities;
- emphasis on men's unequal relations to men, as well as men's relations to women;
- attention to the implications of gay scholarship and sexual hierarchies;
- distinguishing between hegemonic, complicit, subordinated, and marginalized (and sometimes other) masculinities;
- highlighting of contradictions, and at times resistance(s);
- the analysis of the institutional/social, interpersonal and intrapsychic (psychodynamics) aspects of masculinities; and
- explorations of transformations and social change.

In *Masculinities*, Connell discusses hegemonic masculinity in terms of the link with Gramsci's analysis of economic class relations through the operation of cultural dynamics, and notes hegemonic masculinity is open to challenge and possible change. In that book hegemonic masculinity is defined as:

“... the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.” (Connell, 2005: 77).

At times, Connell refers to hegemony, domination, subordination and marginalization as *social processes*; at other times, Connell has described hegemonic masculinity as a “configuration of gender practice”; whilst both of these approaches are not easily compatible with seeing hegemony masculinity as a specific form or type of masculinity, others have often used the term in this way.

So what has been learnt from critical studies on men and masculinities, and what are the implications of critical studies on men and masculinities for debates on men and leadership? How do this approach and its critiques translate into the question of (men’s) leadership?

Perhaps a first implication is to problematize the well established so-called sex differences and sex role approaches to sex/gender and leadership. Much of the study of women, men and leadership has been elucidated through this approach, in what can be described a version of social essentialism or social sex role mutation of biologism (Burrell & Hearn 1989). In many such studies, men are (found to be) less person-oriented, less transformational as leaders (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt 2001). On the other hand, in some studies little difference has been found (Boulgarides 1984; Donnell & Hall 1984), and in some situations some women managers and leaders may more achievement-oriented than both men and other women.

Despite methodological problems with simple sex/gender differences approaches, they continue to live on, especially in public, managerial and media discourses. This is not necessarily in terms of styles of doing leadership, but also in gendered constructions of leadership. For example, men are reported as less likely than women to construe leadership in transformational terms, and to describe their own leadership as transformational, and moreover may be less likely to be described by others as transformational. Rather they are more likely to be described as ‘laissez-faire’ or in terms of management-by-exception (Alimo-Metcalf & Alban-Metcalf 2005).

Perhaps most importantly in most of such differences approaches there is little sense of the political dynamism and social contingency of men, masculinities and leadership.

Moreover, to find sex differences (or not) does not explain gender power relations; for that, there is a need to look to wider networks, relations, structures, as emphasized in critical studies on men and masculinities.

A second set of implications concerns how different versions of men's leadership link with different masculinities. In particular, at least some forms of men's leadership can be interpreted as or within the frame of hegemonic masculinity – “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.” This is most obvious in relation to those models of (men's) leadership that are defined in terms of individualism, toughness, heroicism and decisiveness. But in doing this, there are, however, dangers of returning to an amended version of (male sex) role theory. As noted, there is a need to move beyond the analysis of men and leadership in terms of leadership and management styles.

At the same time, masculinities theory and theories of hegemonic masculinity have been subject to an increasing range of critiques. First, there is often a lack of clarity in the very concept of masculinity: What does “masculinity” mean? Does hegemonic masculinity refer to cultural representations, everyday practices or institutional structures? Can hegemonic masculinity be reduced to fixed set of practices? How does masculinity, hegemonic or otherwise, address the complexities of everyday inculcation and resistance? (for example, Hearn 1996a, 2004). Second, there are detailed empirical studies of how men behave and men talk about themselves that complicate or contradict some of this theory (for example, Wetherell & Edley 1999). Third, there are more general theoretical critiques: historical, poststructuralist, postcolonial, Gramscian (for example Howson 2006). Some of this critique moves the focus to men rather than masculinity/masculinities. This includes going beyond the hegemony of hegemonic masculinity (used outside of its Gramscian frame).

These critiques raise a further set of implications for the analysis of the relations of men and leadership. One problem is that the concept of hegemonic masculinity is often used very loosely and variably, sometimes to mean a form of masculinity. In particular, it is unclear whether it is leadership through force or leadership through control of resources or by example or by persuasion that would be hegemonic (or not). In considering the relationship of hegemonic masculinity (and other masculinities) to leadership, one may ask: how do various *dominant/dominating* forms of leadership

interconnect with each other? How different forms of men's leadership might link with each other is difficult to specify. In one sense it may appear to suggest that men's dominant, dominating or heroic leadership is hegemonic. But we may question: are dominant images of men's leadership part of or illustrative of hegemonic masculinity or not? Not all versions of men's dominant or dominating leadership rely on heroism. To put this differently: is men's heroism in leadership or men's heroic leadership really so hegemonic in many contemporary organizations? Indeed why is heroism 'hegemonic' at all? So is there a case for seeing much of men's contemporary leadership as post-heroic? Perhaps to put this another way: is post-heroic leadership becoming hegemonic? Thus, it is important to go beyond what appear to be obvious connections.

Relating hegemonic leadership to heroism is just one aspect – it is possible to change men's heroic leadership and still have men dominating organizations and management. There are many different ways of being a “successful”, or dominant, man leader. To draw on an earlier analysis of men and management (Collinson & Hearn 1994), some versions of men's leadership are strong on detail, and might be considered by some as formal, even boring and pedantic: *bureaucratic*. In contrast, some are entrepreneurial in style: *entrepreneurialism*; others are jolly and chummy: *informalism*, and some, perhaps many, are self-serving: *careerism*. Thus, it is important not to see men's leadership or indeed “masculine leadership” as one thing. This should not be reified.

This is apparent even in the public political sphere, with such dramatically different and more or less “successful” styles as those of Ahmadi-Nejad, Blair, Berlusconi and Obama. Indeed much of men's leadership is mundane and not so dramatic. Men's leadership practices may coincide with the “normal”, usual, or even official way of doing things. There remains a strong taken-for-grantedness of much even most men's leadership. Discourses on leadership are still typically understood to involve “core elements of masculinity” sustaining asymmetrical gender relations (Ford 2006).

And yet despite all these important questions around the relations of men, masculinities and leadership, they rarely figure in most contemporary scientific debates. For example, the progressive Sage journal *Leadership* has since its institution in 2005 produced 19 issues and 110 scientific papers, of which nine are on women/gender, five mention women/gender, and yet none are explicitly addressing the gendering of men. Indeed the journal presents itself on its website as:

... the leading scholarly journal in the field of researching leadership studies, at the cutting edge of the theory and practice of leadership and organization. The main emphasis in the journal is on interdisciplinary, diverse and critical analyses of leadership processes in contemporary organizations. *Leadership* encourages new ways of researching and conceptualizing leadership.

While there has been a notable growth of studies on men, masculinities and management over the last 20 years, this has not been the same for the area of men, masculinities and leadership. The continuing dominance of men in leadership and leadership “roles” appears “normal” or “natural” and therefore largely escapes critical analysis or commentary.

Putting “men and leadership” in contexts

The second set of issues which are now more important than 20 years ago concern social change and social contextualizations. In recent years my own research has included various transnational project, on: men, women, gender relations and management of transnational corporations; men and gender relations as a policy issue in comparative state and welfare studies; men in men’s movements and NGOs; and sexuality, violence and ICTs in virtual organizing. Meanwhile key themes now with a higher profile in critical studies on men and masculinities (and thus with implications for men and leadership) are: transnationalization; embodiment/ageing; and virtuality. With these issues in mind, there is the need to go beyond the obvious in analysing men, masculinities and leadership. Instead, “men and leadership” need to be placed into several complex contexts, and within them to speak beyond binaries.

Gender/intersectionalities

The first element of contextualization that now seems much more significant is attention to intersectionalities. These include the intersections of gender with age, class, ethnicity, and sexuality, amongst other social divisions and differences. This applies in terms of specifying such categories as “middle-aged men leaders”, “white men leaders”, “middle class men leaders”, “heterosexual men leaders”, “white heterosexual able-

bodied men leaders” (WHAMs) (Hearn & Collinson 1994; Hearn 1996b) and so on. These specifications and intersections are now much more obvious than 20 years ago. Leaders and managers can no longer be seen or analysed as only men or women.

Local/transnational

Second, is the question of the local/transnational. Much, probably most, research on leadership is national in its purview. Even critical gender scholarship has been characterized by “methodological nationalism” (Chernilo 2006), often reinforced through U.S. or Western bias. Questions of globalization, glocalization, transnationalization and postcolonialism are at the forefront of contemporary debate. In particular, postcolonial critiques shift the centre(s) of attention, decentre the One(s). These major social processes cannot be ignored in developing more complex analyses of men and leadership. For my own part, the local/transnational has been highlighted by moving to another country, with an almost inevitable concern with the importance of language and “culture”.³² A concept that I have worked on to make some sense of these transnational patterns is that of trans(national)patriarchies or transpatriarchies (Hearn 2009). These include ‘the gendered transnational corporation’, within and between which men routinely organize and manage. Transnational taken-for-granted gendered hierarchy is a major aspect of men’s leadership in large multinational corporations.

In these modes of organizing men’s leadership can be seen as a form gendered transnational practice, as expressed in the following interview extract from a senior manager in a large transnational corporation.³³

Q: You described the organization structure as a hierarchical one, but how would you characterize the management style?

A: It is not an explicitly masculine style as in the heavy industry for example. We have a sophisticated, polite culture at the superficial level. When you take a deeper look, it is men who discuss with other men and particularly from the owners’, shareholders’ perspective. As we are currently in an economic downturn and the financial result is not impressive, we get more orders than suggestions from the top.

³² For example, in Finnish the word ‘johtaminen’ encompasses both ‘leadership’ and ‘management’ in English, while ‘johtajuus’ is more equivalent to ‘leadership’.

³³ These extracts are from the study reported in Hearn et al. 2008, 2009.

They use the entire hand to steer us, not only their fingers! (102, man, top, human resources)

Men leaders in transnational corporations can reproduce gendered arrangements by providing non-leadership on gender equality policies, as exemplified in this interview with a senior HR manager:

Q: What kind of gender policies do you have in your organization?

A: I'm tempted to say that this conversation will be very short if we discuss this issue. Let me rephrase the question. Why would you have gender policies in the first place?

Q: Well, what I'm asking is that...

A: Yes, yes, but in our culture, everyone is equal and there isn't a need for such policies. Whether this is the reality, whether the practices promote equality is then another story. [finger pointing] You shouldn't look at gender policies but practices. That's the real issue.

A further form of gendering of the gendered multinational corporation, as organizational transpatriarchies, is men's relations to home and work. The work of leadership may itself be founded on very traditional marriage-type relations for many men in senior leadership positions (Hearn et al. 2008). An illustrative quotation from a top manager interview on how unpaid domestic work supports some men's leadership follows:

Q: Did your wife work or stay at home while you were abroad?

A: She was at home for 10 years. When we returned to [Nordic country] and then later to Finland she was ready to start work again. (--) She has the same education as I have. *For us as a family, it was an excellent solution that she could stay at home and take care of the children and home.* (my emphases)

Men's transnational patriarchal leadership occurs in many other arenas – in militarism, in international relations and transgovernmental institutions, in relation to transport, energy, water, environment, and in information and communication technology. These produce new intersectionalities of local/transnational practice in men's leadership.

Embodied/virtual

A third matter that now deserves much closer attention is the relation of embodiment and virtuality, not least through the spread of information and communication technology in everyday leadership, and the growing focus on embodiment, ageing, disability, sexuality and violence, and queer theory in social analysis. One of the early examples of foregrounding the body was Michael Roper's (1996) study of study of homosocial desire admiration, emulation between men in management, emphasizing the importance of dress, clothing, hair, style and pose; as one manager put it, "... he was a joy to watch ...". This stands in contrast to the 'missing body in leadership research' (Ropo & Sauer 2008; also see Sinclair 2005). An embodied perspective on men's leadership may fit closely with homosociality in organizations (men's greater valuation of men (leaders), and preference for men and men's company [Lipman-Blumen 1976]), and cultural cloning (the tendency to reproduce more of the same (leaders), by gender, ethnicity, organizational culture, tradition, and so on [Essed & Goldberg 2002]). "More feminine" leadership by men towards other men might be reinterpreted as a form of male bonding. There remains very little embodied gendering of men's leadership.

The spread of ICTs has brought time/space compression, instantaneousness, asynchronicity, reproducibility of image production, the creation of virtual bodies, the blurring of 'real' and 'representational', wireless portability, globalized connectivity, and personalization (Hearn 2006). Thus embodied approaches to men's leadership are themselves complicated by contradictions in virtual leadership practices, with the paradoxical play of the embodiment of the virtual, and the virtual of the embodiment. Men's leadership can increasingly be seen as embodied, virtual, national/local/transnational practice.

Theory/practice

Finally, there is theory/practice. This was an important aspect of the 1989 *Equal Opportunities International* special issue, but is still often forgotten. Twenty 20 years on, the relations of theory and practice remain vital in both organizations and research, itself a form of organizational practice. Now there is perhaps more debate about what is to count as 'theory', and the gendering of men in 'theory'. Similarly, we may ask: what is

to count as practice? There is widespread support for transformational leadership, but the question remains for men – transformational or transforming to what? For profeminist leadership, this means men supporting women; men changing men against sexism, patriarchy, oppression; and change in the *quantity* of men leaders, and the *quality* of men's leadership, and the *content* of men's leadership: a possible virtuous circle! To develop theory/practice on men's leadership means explicitly and critically gendering transnational, societal and organizational contexts of men's leadership, and gendering men's embodied/virtual practices leadership practices.

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Less Modesty, More Bravado: Leadership through the gender lens: Women, men and equality in organisations

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In these critical and highly competitive times for human and financial resources leaders must not retreat from the achievement of gender equity within their organisations: indeed, such times call for a radical makeover of the modest, “small wins” approach to enable a shift in focus from “the problem is women” to strategic interventions that accurately target “the problem is the culture of our organization” (Sinclair 1998). The lack of women in key decision-making roles and an associated excess of men at senior management levels means that the majority of women’s voices are rarely heard or considered. If we are to redress this gender imbalance in leadership teams, there is a need for bold risk-taking, alongside incremental tactics to change the habits and practices of masculinist organisations.

The author draws on her three-year, PhD research project in a highly masculinist workplace to demonstrate how radical, “big wins” change management initiatives can be deployed to challenge and overcome the “situational construction of gender” (Messerschmidt 1995: 171). To identify the underlying causes contributing to the gendered workplace culture at her research site the author developed an innovative, methodological framework that comprised a complex interplay between four qualitative models: participatory action research, Quality Management, a gender lens interventionist approach and feminist ethnography.

Four short case studies from this long research project are presented to show what male leaders can see, learn and do when they learn how to apply a gender lens to entrenched masculinist practices within their organisations.

Introduction

In this paper I bring into sharper focus four men who participated in my doctoral research project in a policing organisation; I do so to illustrate what happens when a radically different approach is employed to unearth the reasons for an ongoing absence of women from leadership roles. As I will show, outcomes can be very different when the problem (the lack of women) and the tools for identifying the underlying causes (the gender lens) are put in the hands of some male leaders. These men had to learn how to apply a gender lens to the gendered practices of their highly masculinist workplace. Each of them belonged to insider teams of both men and women. The longevity of the intensive, participatory action research project (three years) meant that all project participants became very adept at applying a “gender lens” to the day to day processes, attitudes, behaviours and policies that had contributed to an “excess of men” (Sinclair 2004³⁴) in leadership positions in their organization.

Before introducing the case studies I provide a short overview of some of the key components of the overall research project, including: the genesis for the collaborative project, the methodological framework underpinning the project outcomes (below), and the role of my reference group and the six project teams. These components are reported in full in the doctoral dissertation (Harwood 2006).

The research project

When a new Police Commissioner arrived from a different country to take on the role of being the chief to one of the most isolated policing jurisdictions in the world, he noticed immediately that there was an absence of women from the top ranks of his organisation. By reading the demographic data provided by his equal opportunity coordinator he was able to see that the speed of change had been glacial in terms of increasing the numbers of women in this policing jurisdiction: in fact the participation rate of women had only increased from 3.1% to 12.1% over the preceding two decades. Further, other jurisdictions were doing much better in attracting and retaining women with a resultant widening of the gap between this Commissioner’s organisation and others across the country.

³⁴ A term used by Amanda Sinclair in an address to a group of participants on a policing leadership course in Melbourne 2004. Rather than referring to the lack of women, she instead referred to the skewed gender ratios of policing [and other masculinist workplaces] as an “excess of men”.

Determined to make a difference to the numbers, participation, profile and progress of women during his tenure the Police Commissioner willingly entered into a collaborative arrangement with a local university to secure government funding for a three-year project. With project funds in hand, the Commissioner, the author and her PhD supervisor³⁵ embarked together on a feminist-inspired, collaborative project with the agreed goal to “redress the gendered workplace culture of policing”. The organisation had embarked on a number of (largely unsuccessful) change strategies during the terms of previous commissioners; the goal this time was to develop recommendations for change that were linked to a framework for successful implementation. Keen to see positive outcomes from the outset, the police chief maintained his support, interest and commitment throughout this participatory action research project.

The research methodology

The methodological framework comprised a complex interplay between four qualitative models: the gender lens interventionist approach, participatory action research, Quality Management, and feminist ethnography. That combination of feminist goals and action research techniques drew men and women into insider teams for the purpose of conducting a thorough, forensic examination of the gendered organization of their workplace.

Researchers at the Center for Gender in Organizations (Simmons, Boston) designed their “gender lens” approach (Kolb & Merrill-Sands 1999: 196; Kolb & Meyerson 1999: 129) and describe its application as a way of viewing what goes on below the organisation’s surface activities. The gender lens allows a view under and around these activities, to examine the gender dynamics that lie beneath. These gender dynamics, they suggest, are a core product of inequalities between women and men.

In presenting and discussing four case studies from this research project I use the terms “Reference Group” and “project teams” to describe key elements of the research methodology: the Reference Group comprised men and women of different ranks and levels from within the organisation; after establishing a shared understanding of their research topic, each of this group in turn established teams of insider researchers around them. These sub-groups became known as the project teams. Reference Group

³⁵ The late Associate Professor Joan Eveline, University of Western Australia

and project team participants made it clear from their first meetings that they wanted to engage with the research topic in a meaningful way. The overall framework of the research methodology was specifically designed to fulfil this desired level of engagement and ownership. At the same time, the application of the gender lens would require careful and ongoing facilitation on my part, to guide and support the development of good group process among and between these internal (policing) and external (the university) collaborators. The regular team meetings were the vehicle for the development of a gendered dialogue; further, these structured, collaborative forums for men and women enabled them to look through the gender lens together.

I had been keen to engage men in this gender dialogue, to observe and learn from their experiences as they applied a gender lens to the gendered practices of their workplace. Their inclusion was the means by which I am now able to turn an analytical lens on the experiences of men from my insider research teams, to explore how they separately, and collectively, engaged in leadership practices that enabled them to challenge the status quo. At the same time I can also test one of Collinson and Hearn's (2003) key assertions: that through such inclusion we "may in turn produce innovative and more sophisticated accounts of the conditions, processes and consequences of power relations in contemporary organizations (2003: 83)".

Introduction to the case studies

As I explore how each of my chosen subjects engaged in the participatory action research, I will show how they had to mediate their own positioning between being leaders of change while maintaining their membership of a highly structured, rules-bound organisation. They also had to manage their fear of backlash, and their own and others' resistances to proposed changes. In my formally designated role as a researcher, I worked closely with these four participants over a two to three year period, facilitating fortnightly team meetings with most, and maintaining very regular phone and email contact with all of them throughout this period. With such close contact, I was able to observe and make notes on their separate, yet interconnected, research journeys.

While "the Commissioner" is referred to as such in his case study (as it is not possible to protect his identity), I have given a pseudonym to each of the other three men as follows - "Abe", "Ronald" and "Leon". I present each of them in turn.

“The Commissioner”

I begin with the Commissioner as he was essentially the project leader. His disquiet about the gender imbalance in his new policing organisation, combined with his desire to explore the worrying number of harassment complaints created the impetus for his sponsorship of the collaborative project underpinning the PhD thesis. Understanding from the outset the importance of direct and open communication channels, he allowed the research student to bypass the normative terms of engagement within his hierarchical organisation to report to him directly throughout the life of the research project.

As the project progressed we all learned that there could be certain dangers for men like the Commissioner who step out from their prescribed gender roles – especially when they lead the organisation. In one compelling example of such dangers, we heard that the ultimate insult had been directed towards the Commissioner when one of his senior managers reportedly suggested within hearing of other senior males that the Commissioner was a “woman”. This epithet, delivered in a derogatory tone was designed to emphasise that the Commissioner’s support for women had turned him into a woman. More often we would hear criticism of the Commissioner that filtered through from the frontline that he was being too much of an *apologist* for women.

Observing the Commissioner’s journey through the lens of the research project, we all learned that his power was both reliant upon and imbued by his professional identity as a leader. At the same time, he was putting his masculinity on the line by leading a project that focused on the absence of women in his organisation. Kerfoot (2002) quotes Kimmel (1994) to outline the scope of this kind of risk taking in her discussion on masculinity and professional identity:

“Within the dominant culture, the masculinity that defines white, middle-class, early middle-aged heterosexual men is the masculinity that sets the standard for other men, against which other men are measured and more often than not, found wanting.” (Kimmel, cited in Kerfoot, 2002: 88).

Perhaps affording a more nuanced account of what was happening for the Commissioner as he tried to manage perceptions about his masculinity, Messerschmidt (1995: 172) suggests that “...gender involves a situated accomplishment: ‘the activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions, attitudes and activities

appropriate to one's sex category". While our research data had already pointed to one of the key problems for women police as their need to "situate their gender" within the hostile, male territory of this workplace, we learned from the Commissioner's experiences that the same territory can be hostile to those men who are seen as being too supportive of women.

"Abe"

An older and somewhat wiser senior police officer, Abe was a member of the Reference Group and also led his own small project. Abe stood out from other police officers in that he is described as something of a "maverick" within this policing culture, not least because like Janus³⁶, the Roman god, he was not constrained by "gates and doors". An officer of relatively senior rank and many years' service he was a regional representative on our project reference group. Abe initiated and participated in the case study that he entitled "Woman in a Goldfish Bowl" which examined what happens to women when they are promoted into roles previously held by men.

With his capacity to see in both directions, Abe understood what had come before and could name some of the practices that had contributed to the current culture of policing for women in this organisation. Looking ahead of him, he shared his vision with us of the long, hard journey ahead if we were to bring about the kind of changes intended through this project. Joining the Reference Group for its second meeting, Abe told his new colleagues that he had conducted some preliminary data gathering. Using a vernacular that we came to understand as his own, Abe said that he had done this, by speaking to "quite a few guys, over a beer, when they tell the truth". Abe said that they all knew about the Commissioner's message regarding the importance of having more women in policing but interpreted this as their new chief "taking the soft option" and "playing up to the pollies" (politicians).

Reporting on the experiences of his woman officer in her new role became Abe's project; over time, however, Abe began to express great reservations about his capacity to respond appropriately to some of the escalating incidents occurring at the woman officer's remote regional location. Abe confessed that some of the difficulties reported

³⁶ "Janus": the Roman god of gates and doors, beginnings and endings, and hence represented with a double-faced head, each looking in opposite directions". From Encyclopedia Mythica, Online. <http://www.pantheon.org/articles/j/janus.html> [Accessed November 25, 2005].

by his officer were not of her own making. The community, unused to anyone other than the stereotypical tall, large, male police officer, had still not embraced the concept of having a female officer in charge of the police station. This resistance to her presence in the male-dominated town was just one of the daily challenges this station officer was facing.

In discussing some of the issues, Abe admitted to the Reference Group that, until recently, he had not known how to respond appropriately to this woman's "floods of tears". He stated that he had never experienced this response to stress before. He had spoken about it with other women, who had suggested that it was normal and natural in the circumstances of the obvious stress that this woman was experiencing. Abe noted that the stereotypical male response to stress was perhaps less constructive. He suggested that most male police officers in the same situation would "go to the pub and get a skinful".

Organisational responses to this woman's placement were indicative of some patronising, paternalistic and biologically deterministic notions that collectively represented a view that women were not suited to the "real" work of policing. Joan Acker (1990: 151) asserts that such views can be triggered when women's embodiment of the "abstract, bodiless worker" interferes with gendered notions of organisational logic and organisational theory:

"Women's bodies – female sexuality, their ability to procreate and their pregnancy, breast-feeding, and child care, menstruation, and mythic "emotionality" – are suspect, stigmatized, and used as grounds for control and exclusion." (Acker 1990: 152).

In his initial, and then continuing support for his officer, and through all of the associated difficulties of her appointment, Abe demonstrated some of the "responsible actions" that Jeff Hearn (2001: 15) cites in his discussion of men's roles in promoting gender equality. Listing a range of behaviours that he describes as "more *responsible* action for men" (author's emphasis), Hearn (2001: 15) suggests that "getting and giving support" and "becoming a good listener" are two positive ways for men to improve their capacity to "oppose gender injustice".

Ronald is the subject of my next case study; although formally endorsed with the authority to challenge and change “gender injustice” in this workplace he did not share Abe’s enthusiasm for testing organisational constraints.

“Ronald”

Best described as Abe’s total opposite, Ronald was a relatively senior administration manager who participated on the Reference Group and had some line management reporting responsibilities for the project and its outcomes. Ronald was a doubter, a stickler for bureaucratic procedures and rules, and ambivalent about his support from the beginning to the end of the project. He did not lead or participate in any of the individual project teams, but did play a key role in identifying and nominating people for membership on these groups.

Ronald demonstrated from the first meeting that he would be taking his role very seriously. We came to understand over time that he understood his role included gate-keeping. As a long-term public servant, conditioned to conforming with the bureaucratic requirements and processes of his office, Ronald was keen to describe, and then maintain, the separation and distinctions between police and public service officers, and the ranks and levels. He knew the power brokers, and he understood the risks involved in challenging overt and covert reporting lines.

At our second Reference Group meeting Ronald provided the group with a brief summary of a recent report from the Office of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment. This information was particularly important because, he said it was a “bad report card”. At a subsequent meeting, and despite his own reservations about releasing sensitive information, Ronald presented the group with some of the statistics underpinning the report card. The data showed that the majority of women in this organisation earn less than their male counterparts. Further, the profile of women in policing in this state was indicative of a low equity index, with a low representation of women at all levels of the organisation compared with all other jurisdictions in Australasia. Not surprisingly, this organisation also had the lowest proportion of female commissioned officers in Australia, falling behind all other states, and the gap getting wider.

Ronald's ambivalence about releasing information of this kind proved to be a continuing hurdle throughout the life of the research project. His resistance to putting information on the table to be discussed was undoubtedly a function of the roles he was required to juggle while participating on this group. Much of what we would be working on was within his area of responsibility. An additional challenge for him was that the project methodology removed some of his normal authority. As part of the Reference Group he was only one member of a consensus-based, decision-making team, examining a complex issue with tools that were very new to him.

Through our many interactions over the ensuing several years I realised that Ronald was playing a pivotal role in creating, maintaining and driving some of the very positive, as well as some of the very negative, forces that were brought to bear on this project. It was evident that the power of the group was stronger than any one individual within it. Accordingly, the other members of the Reference Group remained strong in their commitment to bring about change. They stood their ground on many issues contested by Ronald. Invariably, finding he was "the odd man out" Ronald would flip his allegiances and come on board. Seemingly, with reservations expressed, he was then able to endorse most of the group's work, including the landmark recommendations they put forward in the final report.

It is clear that Ronald must have felt very insecure on the tightrope that he was walking, mediating between his role as a Reference Group member and his formally ascribed role as gatekeeper to the organisation's formal processes, policies, procedures, secrets, historical antecedents and power plays. One fall, and the usual safety nets would not be in place. It is not surprising, therefore, that Ronald was ambivalent about his role on the Reference Group; here was both an opportunity, and a potential risk. "Leon", the last of my case studies, affords a younger man's perspective of what can happen when the view through the gender lens becomes almost too painful to see.

"Leon"

A relatively young leader on his way up from the middle ranks of his policing organisation, Leon was a member of a project team that closely examined the barriers (real or perceived) to the advancement of women police officers. Leon's passion for his profession and his desire for culture change emerged early in this project. At the same

time, there were some clear indications that Leon lacked awareness about the gendered nature of his organisation. For example, when Leon first joined his project team and began to discuss the proposed line of research, he expressed surprise about some data that showed the relatively small numbers of women within the higher ranks. During a discussion about recruitment and the current rate of women's participation at entry point, Leon told the group that when he had joined the organisation, his recruitment school had included a particularly large cohort of women. He recalled that this higher than usual percentage (25%) was because he had joined just after the advent of the *Equal Opportunity Act* in this state. According to his recollection, it was at that time that the police service had been told that it needed to "lift their game".

Aware of the low numbers of women at Leon's current rank, I had interrupted at this point in his story to ask him a question. *Where are all of those women now, if so many of them came into the service at the same time as you did?* This proved to be a perplexing question for Leon, and one he said that he had never considered before. In response, he started to name and to add up on his fingers those whom he could recall from this cohort who were still in policing. He could only name five. From his class of 60 people, he said, there had to have been at least fifteen women (25%). He wondered out loud: "What had happened to them all?" Leon declared at this meeting that he was going to find out the answer to this question. He also commented at this time and during several meetings afterwards, that he could not understand how he had not noticed this discrepancy before.

After a short time Leon had gathered his data and demonstrating his dedication to the cause, he entered the meeting room with a heavy pile of yearbooks that represented each year of his own service. As he opened each book we could all see where Leon had used a 'marker pen' to highlight the names of the women from his recruitment cohort. Leon told us that he was astonished to find that as the years went by there were fewer and fewer names to highlight in his books; he was even more amazed to discover that until now, he had not noticed. Leon indicated that for the most part, he had "no idea" what had happened to these women. He thought that while some may have married, had children and left that this could not, and should not be accepted as the only reason for women to have left the job. He of course had done the same thing – married, had children, but was still here, and was still moving on an upwards career trajectory.

Leon's highlighted yearbooks provided a graphic representation of women police officers "gone missing". The issue was that until Leon's rudimentary search, there was

no data. Moreover, the organisation had no record of why these women had left. They had vanished. Accordingly, there was an excess of men in the middle to senior ranks. Had they not “disappeared” en route, women should have been occupying at least a quarter of these positions. Leon’s basic research was a turning point in his group’s understanding of the importance of their project.

Conclusion

The four case studies in this paper provide the means to explore some of the learning that occurs for both men and women when men have the opportunity to engage with women in a gender dialogue. Their involvement in the Reference Group and the various project teams provided three of these men with new kinds of forums within which they could safely collaborate, commiserate, and affirm their skills and knowledge, while at the same time gain some organizational recognition for those capacities and understandings. As they gained more awareness about the seriousness of their research topic, so they became increasingly determined and emboldened in their quest to find and implement some appropriate forms of redress to identify, disrupt and eradicate at least some of the hostility towards women in their organisation.

At the same time, their Commissioner was able to stand in front and alongside their efforts, enabling and leading the project while contributing some of his own learning to the dialogue. From the start to the finish line the Commissioner demonstrated his leadership and commitment, despite some serious attempts by others to scuttle the project during his term of office.

The insider researchers were each part of a coalition of team members who developed and shared a broad understanding of the complexities and cultural norms of their workplace. Support could be called upon, issues presented for inspection and analysis, and the clout of some more senior ranking team members brought to bear, as appropriate, on some of the internal resistance they faced among their wider cohort of colleagues.

The criticality of the extensive timeframe should not be underestimated when assessing how and why collective action became such an important part of this project. The research teams worked long and hard on their projects, investing considerable time to gather and analyse their data and to develop some meaningful recommendations for

change. This investment of time to reflect on gendering processes is rare in policing, and indeed, in many other organisations where there are few opportunities for men and women to engage as equals in a collegial forum in which reflection and discussion are the main game.

What we all learned from the overall research project is that there is a need for less modesty, more bravado when slow, incremental change is out of sync with the dimensions of the problem. There is also a need for critical acts (Dahlerup 1988) and critical mass (Kanter 1977). Engaging and enabling men in research projects of this kind, providing them with both the tools (the gender lens) and the means (a participatory action research methodology) can produce an entirely different focus as men closely examine the continuing absence of women (and an associated excess of men) in their workplaces.

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Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives on Gender in Humanitarian Logistics

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Logistics is continuously portrayed as a male dominated field, with a focus on ‘male’ skills and even vocabulary. Prior studies in humanitarian logistics, however, suggest not only a lack of, but also a need for, female humanitarian logisticians. This paper presents the findings from a survey on the gendered nature of logistics skills. Particular attention is paid to the discrepancy between quantitative and qualitative findings from the survey. Findings also highlight situations in which the gender of the logistician has an effect on logistics performance. The hazardous working environment of humanitarian logisticians favours male logisticians for security reasons, but needs female humanitarian logisticians in order to access and understand (female) beneficiaries.

Introduction

Logistics has for a long time been criticised for being a male-dominated field, including from the perspective of a rather masculine vocabulary (Metcalf, Headlam-Wells & Mangan 2007). The male image of the logistics discipline can be attributed to its association with the field of engineering (Sohal & D’Netto 2004; European Parliament 2007). Even those application areas of logistics where the overall female:male staff ratio is otherwise predominantly female, such as in humanitarian organisations where it is up to 90:10 overall, this ratio is reversed when it comes to logistics. At the same time, humanitarian logistics is a field in which the gender of the logistician has significant implications (Kovács & Tatham 2009).

Apart from the very notion of a gendered disaster vulnerability, the specific (and gendered) needs of those affected by a disaster are understood through the activity of needs assessment, though access to male and female beneficiaries often depends on the sex of the person assembling this data. Importantly, the resultant data drives the logistical provision of humanitarian aid, i.e. what is provided and to whom. Access to aid also depends on a number of cultural attributes including those related to gender. Another area in which a gendered approach was considered to be important was that of the “last mile” deliveries. Here, again, the presence of female logisticians was perceived to have benefit in meeting the needs of those affected by the disaster in a sensitive and appropriate way. It is, however, stressed that the research did not suggest that all of the logisticians should be female (or male) – rather that there was *prima facie* evidence from the literature that a suitable mix of both genders would be more effective than the current situation in which, generally, only male logisticians are present in the aftermath of a disaster (Kovács & Tatham 2009).

Yet there is a lack of clarity not only of gender attributes in logistics, but more broadly of the skills logisticians need to perform better in their respective environment, be it business, humanitarian, or the military. Whilst some skills may be generally of importance to logistics, the set of skills that are emphasised may be context-dependent. The aim of this article is, therefore, to examine the gendered nature of logistics skills with a focus on the humanitarian context. Quantitative and qualitative findings from a survey are presented and contrasted.

A survey on gender in humanitarian logistics

Prior logistics literature has investigated the areas of gender, logistics skills and logistics performance as separate from each other. This study presents a survey that combines all three.

The conceptual model and survey construction

The study was based on a conceptual model linking the areas of gender, logistics skills and logistics performance. Gender has been previously considered in logistics literature from the perspective of the underrepresentation of women in the field which is

reflected in a number of studies, e.g. the Canadian Logistics Institute's studies, CILT UK's survey, and the annual Ohio State survey among the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals. Whilst they have been criticised for some sampling problems, i.e. for not necessarily capturing female logisticians as they may not be members of any of these associations (Trunick 2007), all these surveys point into the direction that female logisticians are scarce overall. Furthermore, whilst their number may be increasing, they rarely occupy higher management positions (see also Lynagh, Murphy & Poist 1999). Two barriers are commonly cited for entering the logistics profession: work-family conflicts, and the male image of logistics. This is demonstrated in education where there is a paucity of female logistics students, with the Fritz Institute reporting only 20% of students enrolled in their (global) training courses for the Certification of Humanitarian Logisticians and Certification for Humanitarian Supply Chain Management by mid-2008 being female (MacDonald, 2008). Thus sex segregation in logistics can, at least in part, be attributed to females not entering the profession in the first place (Trunick 2007).

Logistics skills, on the other hand, were highlighted for the purposes of career development (Murphy & Poist 2007), including the development of training and education programmes (Mangan, Gregory & Lalwani 2001), and to emphasise differences between the skill sets of logisticians and supply chain managers (Dischinger, Closs, McCulloch, Speier, Grenoble & Marshal 2006; Gammelgaard & Larson 2001). Considering the view on logistics as an engineering discipline, it is not surprising that the T-shaped model of skills has also been introduced to logistics. This model suggests that the modern manager (including the logistics manager) requires a combination of 'hard' technical knowledge and 'soft' business skills (cf. van Hoek, Chatham & Wilding 2002; Mangan & Christopher 2005; Veerecke, Boute, Dierdonck & Seernels 2008). In other words, the T-shaped model introduces an emphasis beyond 'functional logistics skills' such as transport and inventory management, to groups of skills related to 'general management', 'problem-solving' and 'interpersonal skills'. This is not to underemphasise 'functional logistics skills' which are still the basics for the profession and, to apply Mason-Jones, Naylor and Towill's (2000) words, the 'market qualifiers' for logistics, but to highlight the importance of further sets of skills as 'market winners'. The (scarce) literature combining gender and logistics skills emphasises differences in leadership skills (female leaders being more empathetic and gathering more social backing for their decisions, CSCMP 2006), and negotiation skills, where female purchasers arguably 'soften' initial negotiation phases (Min, LaTour & Jones 1995).

Which sets of logistics skills should be emphasised, however, needs to be evaluated from the perspective of logistics performance. However, not only have skills not been evaluated from this perspective, but the T-shaped model of logistics skills has yet to be tested empirically. Generally, however, logistics performance is a much-researched topic (Neely 1999), with increased attention being paid to metrics also in not-for-profit contexts (Micheli & Kennedy 2005; Moxham 2009), including humanitarian logistics (Beamon & Balcik 2008; Schulz & Heigh 2009).

In summary, it is suggested that the areas of logistics skills, logistics performance and gender are interlinked. Thus different sets of logistics skills would appear to impact on logistics performance, with gender affecting this relationship. This leads to the conceptual model in Figure 1 as the basis of this study.

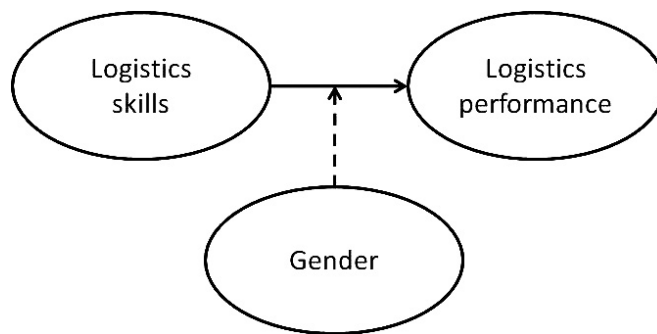


Figure 1. Logistics skills and performance in the light of gender

Based on this conceptual model, a survey was constructed that included questions on logistics skills as portrayed in the T-shaped model, in relation to logistics performance. Apart from demographical data, the survey questionnaire set out to capture the relevance of logistics skills for logistics performance, in essence evaluating the perceived importance of each skill (belonging to one of the sets of ‘functional logistics skills’, ‘general management skills’, ‘problem-solving skills’ and ‘interpersonal skills’) for logistics performance on a 7-point Likert scale (1-not important -> 7-very important). Thus, particular skills were not evaluated per se, rather in relation to their

perceived impact on logistics performance overall. Skills for each subset were developed from the literature (notably, Mangan & Christopher 2005; Murphy & Poist 2007; Thomas & Mizushima 2005; Vereecke et al 2008), and complemented (or re-labelled) in a pilot study at the LRN 2007 conference (see

Appendix A). A further set of questions asked for the gender attribution of the same skills, again on a 7-point Likert scale with 1-best carried out by females, 4-gender not important to 7-best carried out by males. This was complemented by a general question to rate whether the gender of the logistician was important to logistics performance. The survey ended with open-ended questions on positive and negative situations in which the gender of the logistician had an effect on logistics performance, and a final open-ended question on 'why do you think there are so few female humanitarian logisticians?'

Data collection

To highlight the skills needed in humanitarian logistics, the survey was sent out to humanitarian logisticians as well as logisticians in other application areas such as business logistics, military logistics, and academia in the sample. The online survey was distributed via mailing lists (such as CILT International's newsletter and the humlognews list) and promoted via links on for example the WISE webpage. Further snowball sampling was employed, asking logisticians to distribute the survey among their colleagues in their own and other organisations.

The response rate can be estimated (cf. Menachof, Gibson, Hanna & Wihteing 2009) from the number of site visits (505) that resulted in 174 valid submissions (34.5%). Respondent demographics show that the respondents had a significant expertise in the logistics field, with 46.6% having worked in logistics for over 10 years (a number that is higher outside of academia, totalling 59.8%). They represented citizens of 36 countries, with deployments in 35 (other) countries, attesting a global expertise, albeit UK citizens and deployments were overrepresented at 41.9%. Importantly given the focus on gender in our research, 41.4% of respondents were female, though the figure is lower if one takes out academics and 'other' (34.3%) as well as for humanitarian logisticians (37.9%). Overall, it reflects the male dominance of logistics but also shows a bias

towards female humanitarian logisticians responding to the survey. This is probably less surprising considering the publicity the survey got via WISE, the Women's Institute for Supply Chain Excellence, which has it as its mission to increase the number of female humanitarian logisticians by 80% by 2010.

Quantitative data analysis

In terms of the responses to the first section of the survey (in which respondents were invited to indicate the importance of the 32 skill sets), the areas of 'general management' or even 'functional logistics' skills were perceived by the respondents to be of lesser importance than 'problem solving' and 'interpersonal' skills. Whilst this may be surprising in the light of Mangan and Christopher (2005) highlighting the importance of 'general management skills' for logisticians, on the other hand the finding is aligned with van Hoek et al.'s (2002) suggestion of functional logistics skills being a qualifier but not a differentiator for employment in logistics. In other words, logisticians need this kind of 'textbook knowledge', but in order to advance in their careers cannot rely on such skills alone. Notwithstanding differences in the relative importance of skill groups, the survey confirmed the T-shaped model of logistics skills including all of it skill sets.

Turning to the group split between the humanitarian and other cohorts, an independent t-test showed that humanitarian respondents valued functional logistics skills significantly higher than the general group (with the notable exception of reverse logistics and logistics information systems). This would indicate a more traditional view of logisticians in the humanitarian sector and/or the need for more technical (rather than managerial) expertise. Surprisingly, the humanitarian group placed less emphasis on skills such as change management (mean 4.88 vs. the general 5.45) in spite of the dynamics of the sector in responding to disasters as well as employee turnover.

As for the gendered nature of logistics skills, those that came back as more male were transportation and warehousing (from functional logistics skills) as well as leadership (as an interpersonal skill). Only the functional logistics skill of legal specifications was deemed more female, though many of the general management skills (finance and accounting, marketing, customer relationship management), problem-solving (information gathering, information sharing) and interpersonal (listening, oral and

written communication) skills were attributed as being best carried out by females. Interestingly, however, negotiation skills were not among the significantly female ones. As for the humanitarian context that places a stronger emphasis on functional logistics skills, however, the 'male' perception of transportation and warehousing skills may be an explanatory factor for the lack of female logisticians in this field.

Notwithstanding the gendered nature of skills, the question relating gender to logistics performance revealed that the gender of the logistician was perceived to have no effect on logistics performance. (The means of the humanitarian cohort were 3.00 compared to 2.36 generally, with 1 signifying 'no effect' to 7 'highly affects' on the 7-point Likert scale.) This finding is rather surprising considering the ample anecdotal evidence of situations in which the gender of the logistician indeed affected the performance of a humanitarian operation (cf. Kovács & Tatham 2009). Even more surprising was a discrepancy between the statistical insignificance of gender and the numerous situations in which respondents of the very same survey described where the gender of the logistician did, indeed, have an impact on logistics performance.

Qualitative findings from open-ended questions

More intriguingly, and notwithstanding the strictly statistical finding that gender had no bearing, the three open-ended questions in the survey showed a different picture. 29 examples were given where the gender of the logistician had a positive or negative impact on logistics performance, and another 124 insights were offered on the final question of why there are so few female humanitarian logisticians. Both positive and negative examples pinpointed the cultural sensitivities under which humanitarian operations are performed. The following quotes highlight these in particular:

“Although humanitarian organizations are striving to increase the number of female logisticians, in most of the areas where we operate women are under respected or simply banned from performing certain activities. In this context performing logistics activities that require direct interaction with men is challenging, time consuming and most of the time frustrating for women. In Uganda for example, having both women and men working as logisticians has shown that men could perform some tasks such as negotiating procurement of goods or managing staff more easily than

women. Having said this, it is also true that this ease in interacting with the host community is not related to the capacity or skills of women, but with gender discrimination embedded in the society.”

“In a western culture the answer would be a resounding 1 (no). However, if delivering humanitarian logistics in nations/cultures that do not recognise woman in positions of authority or responsibility, gender may become a local issue – this would need to be recognised early on to manage expectations. The opposite is also true of course, where the presence of a male may be detrimental due to local culture sensitivities and a female operative is the only option. [...]”

And, to sum it up:

“The gender of a logistician may have a negative effect on organizational logistics performance when the logistician’s job is to communicate with suppliers(s) and/or customer(s) whose social norms dictate rules of gender in interactions differently from the logistician’s.”

The need for women in humanitarian logistics was also highlighted in the questions asking for (general) examples. One respondent even answered (all capitalised as in original) as the example for a positive effect of the gender of the logistician “WHEN DEALING WITH FEMALE BENEFICIARIES”. More specific examples here referred to needs assessment of personal items and, more particularly, hygiene products. This comment summarises the point:

“In needs identification given that most of those who are normally affected are women so it is easier for women to access women, understand and interpret their actual needs. Women are also quality focused and know a lot more on domestic needs than technical like choosing generators or vehicles.”

Opinions differ on the matter of negotiation, but not on security – in times of conflict, male logisticians are perceived to be an advantage. Generally, however, (humanitarian) logistics is deemed a ‘man’s world’ yet many responses in this section emphasize that there should not be a difference between female and male logisticians, just between personalities and skills.

At the same time, respondents offered quite some insights as to the causes of a lack of female humanitarian logisticians (see Table 1).

Table 1: Causes to a lack of female humanitarian logisticians

| Observation | Number of Times Offered |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Hazardous Environment | 22 |
| Work life balance (including high travel content/separation) | 22 |
| Profession is perceived to be dominated by males | 17 |
| Culture (in affected country) | 15 |
| Perceived nature of job content, especially technical content, is not appealing | 14 |
| Entry level jobs (e.g. trucking/warehousing) are male dominated | 12 |
| Poor marketing of employment possibilities (e.g. in school) | 10 |
| Paucity of female logisticians overall | 3 |
| Physically demanding job | 2 |
| Emotionally stressful job | 2 |
| Living conditions | 2 |
| Job insecurity | 1 |
| Fewer females study technical subjects at school | 1 |
| Females prefer well bounded problems | 1 |
| Total | 124 |

These findings emphasise the perception that the humanitarian logistics field continues to suffer from a degree of male dominance although it is not clear whether this is an historical legacy, or whether it reflects the reality of disaster relief in certain countries where female logisticians are unlikely to be accepted or valued. Questions of access to, and understanding of, (female) beneficiaries call for female humanitarian logisticians, whilst security concerns (i.e. a hazardous environment) for the presence of males. In the view of a respondent, “it is best to have a mixed group of logisticians working together (both women and men) in order to keep things in balance”.

The catch: discrepancies between quantitative and qualitative findings

Whilst some findings are consistent between the quantitative and qualitative analyses (such as negotiation skills not necessarily being female), there is a large discrepancy between the general insignificance of gender and the vast number (as well as rich content) of responses related to particular situations in which the gender of the logistician does, indeed, matter, as well as reasons for the paucity of female humanitarian logisticians. A possible explanation for this discrepancy lies in the normal distribution curve followed in the Likert-scale significance questions, while open-ended questions were, in effect, deliberately asking for outliers. Another possibility is the view that the gender of the logistician should not matter, though some situations favour female or male logisticians. Whichever may be the case, the discrepancy in itself clearly calls for further research on the topic.

Conclusions and further research

The general conclusion of this study is that the T-shaped model of logistics skills has withstood a test across several cohorts of logisticians. However, differences in emphasis arise from the context in which a logistician operates. Humanitarian logisticians, as highlighted in this study, focus more on functional logistics skills – whether for the reasons of a more ‘basic’ or technical orientation of the job, or a more traditional view of what logistics entails. Other than that, functional logistics skills are seen as market qualifiers, and not as market winners or differentiators.

The gendered nature of skills offered some surprises. Neither quantitative nor qualitative analyses could confirm Min et al.’s (1995) view on female logisticians being ‘better’ in purchasing negotiations; rather comments in the survey point to the opposite direction. Generally, some skills could be attributed to be being better performed by females / males. Most interestingly for humanitarian logistics, those functional logistics skills that were most important in this context were deemed male. In other words, the combination of a focus on functional logistics skills, and their perception of being best carried out by men, potentially contributes to a preference of male logisticians in the humanitarian field. Moreover, the focus on ‘male’ functional logistics skills in humanitarian logistics implies that a change away from a traditional view of logistics to

one encompassing a supply chain perspective may lead to more equal representation of both genders. In the light of the perceived operational benefit of female humanitarian logisticians, and the tendency towards a perception that females are particularly adept in the market winning areas of interpersonal and problem solving skills, this is potentially a significant finding – but it clearly requires additional research to validate this tentative conclusion.

One of the most problematic findings of the study is the general insignificance of gender in logistics versus the numerous situations offered in which the gender of the logistician was stated to be of significance. Notwithstanding possible explanations for this discrepancy between the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the survey that have been offered in the earlier discussion, this point deserves more attention in further research.

Finally, it is clear that the outcomes of this survey as they relate to the humanitarian field require triangulation with the views of the beneficiaries. Thus even if the respondents perceived no difference between the impact of logistics performance of male and female humanitarian logisticians, the beneficiaries may see things differently. Needs assessment and the access to beneficiaries are, after all, the areas in which a need for female humanitarian logisticians is highlighted the most.

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Appendix A. Skills in the T-shaped model

| General Management Skills | Functional Logistics Skills | Problem Solving Skills | Interpersonal Skills |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Finance and Accounting | Legal | Problem Identification | Listening |
| Information Technology | Customs, Import and Export | Information Gathering | Oral Communication |
| Change Management | Transport Management | Problem Analysis | Written Communication |
| Marketing | Inventory Management | Information Sharing | People Management |
| Project Management | Warehousing | Problem Solving | Meeting Facilitation |
| Strategic Management | Purchasing & Procurement | | Negotiation |
| Customer Relationship Management | Forecasting | | Stress Management |
| Supplier Relationship Management | Reverse Logistics | | Human Resource Management |
| Risk Management | Port/Airport Management | | Leadership |
| | Logistics Information Systems | | |

Access as Process: On the recession within the engineering industry and its effects on gender research and gender equality work

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Introduction

During the last year or so headlines in industry-related media articles have seen an abundance of drastic, often war-like metaphors. The engineering industry is said to be ‘on its knees’, ‘struggling’, or that it needs to ‘arm to the teeth’³⁷. The metaphors are used to underline the significance of the current economic situation. The recession is far from being only an economic concept. When glancing through last years newspaper articles it is obvious that the creative use of metaphors turn the recession into a cultural object. We all know what a lessened economy can mean in terms of unemployment, bad state affairs and so on. Journalists however, know that the use of metaphors may trigger our emotional responses, should the recession itself fail to do so.

Toss in one or two strong metaphors, and the recession might just send shivers down our spines.

Through culture the current economic situation is dealt with in many different ways by company leaders. Some view it as an opportunity, for some disaster lurks around the corner. Some turn to old solutions, while others look for innovations. This article will take a gender perspective on the economic recession within the engineering industry. We ask what happens with gender equality and gender equality work within companies in times of economic recession? How is the situation dealt with by company leadership, and in what ways are their actions or non-actions connected to issues of gender equality? These questions will be investigated from the point of view of a co-production project between the engineering industry and academia.

³⁷ These particular metaphors are used in a newspaper article in *Nya WermlandsTidningen* (Olsson 2008).

Working together – but for different purposes?

Today, we allegedly live in a so called knowledge economy. Many governments have recognized that this affinity between knowledge and finances demands more useful outcomes of scientific work. The call is for collaboration, the co-production of results of mutual benefit for the industry and for science. In Sweden, a major funder of collaborative projects between industry, science and liberal arts is *The Knowledge Foundation* (TKF). Currently, TKF is financing a range of projects aiming to develop collaborative models. The empiric material in this paper is developed within one of these projects. Differing from other TKF-projects this one is focusing issues of gender and gender equality.

The project was initiated by the company, a multinational engineering company located in mid-Sweden. At the early stages of the project, in preparing for an application to TKF, economic recession had not yet struck globally. On the contrary, the company was flourishing, as was world economy at the time. A couple of executives at the company's human resources department (HR) were engaged in issues of gender equality, and they felt a strong need for revision of their outdated gender equality plan. They got in contact with one of us researchers (with whom they had worked with before) and soon a project plan started to develop.

The actors in the project have different reasons for participating in it. The goal for the company is to develop a model for systematic equality work adjusted to the conditions in engineering industry, while the scientific goal is to find mechanisms that aid or hinder gender equality work in the engineering industry.

We were glad when we received message that TKF had chosen to support our project and by project start in January 2009 we were convinced that the path to the research field lay open, given the signed agreements we had with the company. In retrospect, perhaps we should have known better.

Some notes on access

In scientific articles and research reports 'getting access to the research field' is seldom described or high-lighted as a significant problem or as part of the actual research.

Handbooks on method occasionally deal with the question of access, arguing for the need to find good people who can open doors to “the field”, so called *gatekeepers* (see e.g. Bryman 2002:282). This implies that the act of getting access occurs before actual research takes place, as a means of getting things done later. What is also implied is that access takes place once and that the process of getting access has ended when research begins. Once you get past a certain critical point access is granted, and the path lays open to creating interesting research results. However, access can also be described as an on-going process, a power struggle sometimes dormant, but always present (Fangen 2007:63; Hammersley & Atkinson 2007:41). What we will argue is that access is less about gatekeepers and more about *gatekeeping processes*, less about intentionality and more about mechanisms governing intentions. This process oriented view on access is important to consider when it comes to collaborative or co-productive work between academia and business. The outcome of the joint venture relies heavily on the trust built between the different participators of projects (Andersson, Amundsdotter & Svensson 2009:13). A difficult task for critical gender research in co-production projects is to balance trust against the critical research perspectives. We would argue that such researchers must be reflexive about, and aware of that access is not a finalised product to lean on. Rather, access is an on-going process which can suddenly stop all progress, but it is also a process which can carry important scientific results.

A troublesome project start

Companies and higher education institutions live in a changing reality. When the project finally started in January 2009 the setting had already changed quite a bit from when the project was planned. In just a year, from May 2008 to May 2009, the company had seen three different CEOs, our primary contact persons had left the company and the company’s human resources department was reorganised. In the midst of this, economic recession struck the company.

The ongoing global economic recession is certainly a fact. Although stock exchange has recuperated during the last few months, many companies in the engineering industry still struggle, and continue to lay off personnel. For some companies, it’s a matter of survival. At the same time however, the economic recession also works as a discourse. Discourses condition and make possible the way we think, talk and act on certain

subjects in certain situations. A concept such as 'leader' is not stable and independent of context, but is rather differently comprehended within different discourses (Martinsson 2006:25). In order for 'leaders' to remain their positions they have to act and talk according to the discourse which sustains the notion of 'leadership'. At the same time, the discourse itself only remains as long as people act and speak in a way which correlates with it. Accordingly, the global crises of today is also a social construct, recession is understood and played out in different ways through different discursive understandings of it.

When the project launched our job as researchers was primarily to follow the company's own work with developing a new gender equality plan. Together with a consultant on gender equality issues the HR department had developed a project model which was similar to how the company normally structured other projects. Therefore we expected that the steering group of the company would accept the model. The steering group met once every week and the gender equality project was going to be presented by one of the staff of the HR department. However, the project presentation was lifted from the agenda, and postponed until next weeks meeting. The following week the same thing happened and the newly recruited HR officer responsible for the project at the company got more and more nervous, why was it postponed, she wondered. After being postponed two times the project was finally presented for the steering group. Contrary to our expectations however, the steering group asked the HR department to reorganize the project. They claimed it was too time consuming and drained the company of energy in a time of financial pressure. Now we had reached access points two and three.

Access point one was getting the project contract signed. This stage is often considered *the* access point. After having the signatures on letters of consent, it is easy to presume that the doors to the research field are open. We however had gotten through one door, only to discover that there were more doors, closed ones.

Access point two – a discourse on masculinity

As participators of the project we were disappointed that the steering group had rejected the original project model. Scientifically though the event was interesting. Looking at the isolated incident, the rejection perhaps does not tell us that much. It can

surely be interpreted in many different ways. However, discourses are not sustained by single actions alone but must be iterated over time, by many voices (Butler 1990). And in the course of the project we have become aware that this rejection was one of the iterations of a discourse on masculinity. Looking at the situation from a gender perspective it tells us quite a bit of the conditions for conducting gender research in an engineering company, and of the conditions for producing gender equality work within such settings. In the situation, the economic recession in fact plays an important role. A company within a capitalist economy such as Sweden must certainly be understood as an organisation with primary focus on selling goods, earning and accumulating money. The company is not in business for gender equality, but for engineering. At the same time however, goods are not produced, sold and delivered without effort. It takes humans and human skills in order to do it. These humans are to some extent governed by an established gender order, which split men and women, ascribing them different qualities and competencies (Connell 1987:98-99). In the current gender order men and masculinities are most often associated with the world of 'hard' values, facts and figures, (economic) results, competitiveness and machines (Connell 2005). The all male steering group therefore acted upon an established discourse where production seemed to have nothing to do with the producers. The situation, and the way 'economic recession' was used as a discursive tool, told of how gender equality issues were conceived of within the steering group. In one of the interviews later conducted with a member of the group he stated:

Leader: ... Perhaps we haven't been engaged in these questions. ... We are very much focused on the customer. The strongest quality in [our company] is the importance of the customer. ... In this department we talk about orders, delays, billing and all that. Technology too, of course. ... this goes for the entire company too, it isn't engaged in questions on ethics or gender equality. Projects have been planned but haven't come through, and we go 'We haven't got time!'.

When the project was returned to the HR department it was obvious that we as researchers, as well as the HR staff, had to find another entrance point. Access was denied, and we needed to get the project going.

Access point three – hope and despair

Emotions certainly play a vital role within all organizations (see e.g. Sevón & Sjöberg 2004). In business one only has to think of the stock exchange to realize the importance of emotions within the world of 'hard' values. In our project, access point three was about turning the negative emotions which had been produced by the steering group, a group acting on a discourse of masculinity which ruled out gender equality as a criteria for success in business.

The rejection of the steering group was not a major set back for the scientific part of the project. It altered however relations between the two main co-producers of the project, us and the HR department of the company. The HR project manager had invested much energy and work to succeed with the project presentation when the steering group met. As a newly employed young woman in an all male setting and representative of a very small HR department, she was, and felt, pressured to succeed in her efforts. The set back at the meeting was both a professional and emotional blow for her. When we set up the project our different roles were quite clearly outlined within a non-hierarchical model. We were to co-produce without any one actor being 'in charge'. When the project model fell through it created a set of negative emotions in the HR department. Building up on this was the fact that the hired consultant on gender equality issues abandoned the project all together, claiming that he could only work with the original model he had helped to design. 'Where do we go from here, is there a way forward?', asked the HR department. We needed to help them to come up with an answer, rather quickly.

As is well known within interactive research, equal power relations between participators is an ideal seldom to be realized when it comes to actual collaborative work (see e.g. Reason & Bradbury 2001). A more realistic description of the co-productive process must incorporate the power struggle and renegotiations constantly going on amongst participants. When the project model was rejected by the steering group, it contributed to the pessimistic mood in the HR department. It ran out of energy. At that point our role as researchers was redefined. We were dependent on our relation with the HR department. To get through access point number three the scientific project leader entered somewhat of a therapeutic or coaching mode, working hard to get spirits up at the HR department. This included coming up with suggestions for a new project model, which would please the steering group more. The dialogue between us and the HR department increased at this time and the scientific leader also

aided one of the HR staff members to external coaching assistance. During this time it was we who held much of the initiative for making progress. Involuntarily, we'd got more power than asked for. But we had yet to get the steering group to accept the new project model, in order to finally pass through access point number three.

Access point four – The Gatekeeper

Access point two and three are about processes. Certainly, individuals play an important role within these processes, but the problems of access are not necessarily tied to individual intentions. Our problem was not one or the other gatekeeper, but rather the *gatekeeping processes* going on throughout the project. On a formal level we already had access to the company. At this formal level people can easily realize their own power as gatekeepers. A signature on a paper is a heavy discursive practice³⁸, i.e it has heavy symbolic meaning attached to it and its legal aspects cannot be underestimated. But when the HR department was in a state of despair after the set back at the steering group meeting, we were not aided by the signed contract. As a result of the constant gatekeeping processes the HR department suddenly reappeared as gatekeepers for us, although they themselves felt powerless. The paradox was that at the same time as we got more power over the project, we were subjected to the gatekeeping power of the HR staff, who themselves felt they had no power at all. Power seemed to be everywhere and nowhere (Foucault 2002).

Gender equality projects need promotion by leaders to be successful (see e.g Pincus 1997). However, the 'leader' position is as unstable and negotiated as other positions within an organisation (Martinsson 2006). The power of the leader does not 'belong' to him or her, but is rather an effect of the wide array of power relations structuring all organizations (Foucault 1980). The leader has to reaffirm power through negotiations with lower level leaders, personnel, trade unions, the company board, media and other relations to the world outside the company premises. Having said this, when we worked with access point three – the HR department, it became apparent for us that we needed to address the company CEO directly in order to anchor the new project outline within the company. If we could make him accept the outline, we thought we could have more success in getting other members of the steering group to accept it as well. Two of us researchers met with him at his office, in a meeting of a rather informal character. The

³⁸ On the concept of 'heavy discourses' see Pripp 2001.

informal setting was important. It created room for a reflexive dialogue, a sense of 'working together'. At the same time the meeting was set in his office, and this underlined him as 'in charge', as if he was The Gatekeeper.

The paradox was that – in order to get work done - we needed to confirm the rather traditional discourse on masculinity, invoking images of the sole sovereign male power, the leader as monarch. This of course raises moral questions. Can gender equality work really become emancipative if it accepts governing conditions? Can we really make room for change by asserting traditional male leadership. Well, according to Foucault discourses can never be changed from the outside, only from within (Foucault 2001). Discourses cannot be altered through external pressure, or through single actions. Rather, gender equality work needs patience and endurance and must act upon, rather than against, the established pattern. The most long ranging and effective power always work silently and discretely. It changes mindsets so that we do not realize we have been subjected to power, but rather feel we have voluntarily chosen to act differently. Interpreted in this way, it was not we who got the CEO to go along with our proposal, his decision was rather a discursive effect of the situation.

A brighter beginning?

When writing this the project is still on-going. As for now, power relations within the project have shifted again. We are more on a non-hierarchical dialogue level with the HR department, and the all male leadership has accepted the new project outline. The project will go on until July 2010 and recently we ended an interview session with leaders and trade unions. What has been revealed in these interviews is a more complex picture of leadership within the company. They have different views on gender equality as a concept, and they also differ in their opposition to gender equality work in the company. One could say that the construction of masculinity has shown to be a bit more complex when we actually performed individual interviews with leaders. In interviews most leaders share the view that issues of gender equality are important, at least on a general level. However, they also share a view that *for the time being* gender equality is not, and should not, be a prioritized issue. We have seen few examples of a more progressive approach on gender equality. Hardly anyone has presented a view on gender equality were it actually could be seen as something productive to work with in order to get out of the reality of too few orders and too little billing. We have found

however, small openings for a more progressive approach on gender issues. In the latter part of the interview with the above quoted member of the steering group, he develops his thoughts on the relation between business and gender equality:

Leader: ... And the main problem for us is: 'How can we get more products out on the market? How can we survive in this situation?' And right now it is really hard to focus on the more internal projects so to speak. ... It's hard to focus on stuff like this, unfortunately. I'm sad to say, really. For one could think that right now, when production is low, we should have time for things like these, but not this time. This time we really have to focus on getting new orders, and get the most we can out of production.

In this quote the leader shows proof that there is a bit of an internal struggle going on in him. At first he confirms the picture he painted earlier. Due to the recession the company is in a state of emergency, where actions must be taken promptly to get the company to survive. Projects on gender equality are not a means out of problems, but rather represent obstacles, at the present time. At the same time however, he also realizes that the current situation could be seen as an opportunity to work on matters that rarely fits the agenda of the company. He seems to confirm the uniqueness of the current situation, and that this could open up for innovations. But he quickly closes this opportunity, and his resolution seems to be to do more of the same (but faster), rather than turning attention to other options. Put differently, one could say that he takes his refuge in a traditional masculine discourse, but it is one which is not overtly *against* gender equality issues, but rather a preserver of a traditional way of thinking of business and leadership. As a matter of fact, at the very end of the interview he criticizes other leaders of the company for being conservative on gender issues. His critique is based on the notion that other leaders deals with gender equality as if it was a matter of being politically correct. 'Ideally, you should not have to talk so much about gender equality' he says and goes on:

Leader: ... And you really, this sounds a bit stupid, but I think [they] have to understand that you can't be sitting with two people [to be recruited] and think: 'Hm, who should I chose?' and then go 'Yuck, gender equality, I guess I have to go with the girl'. No, it must be a natural position! I hope that my colleagues can stop to think this way, stop thinking about the theoretical differences between men and women.

The need for reflexivity

In several works sociologist Patricia Yancey Martin have addressed the notion of *unreflexive gender practices* (2003, 2006). In her article 'Practising gender at work: further thoughts' she argues that sexism and gender bias are viewed as illicit at workplaces. However, practices of sexism and gender bias can still occur in a more subtle way in interaction between employees, through non-reflexive practicing. In fact, according to Martin, practices of 'doing gender' often are unintentional (Martin 2006:255f). We believe that it is important to address the unreflexive aspects of gender in organizations. What we have found so far in our study is very little of overt opposition to gender equality, very little of overt demeaning of women or other minorities represented at the company. For most of the leaders with whom we have spoken, gender and gender equality are treated as questions which they claim are important, but are none the less considered as isolated questions, something apart from what the company is all about, producing and selling engineering products.

In interviews some of the leaders expressed a rather narrow definition of gender equality. For them, gender equality is a matter of quantity, a matter of leveling the female-male body count³⁹ (Alvesson 1997). If gender equality is defined in such a narrow way, it is easy to see why the question was considered as unrelated to the work and production environment as a whole. Other leaders were more well-informed about gender as a concept, and were able to see that gender can be 'done' through verbal and bodily actions. In her article Martin argues that research needs to distinguish between *gendering practices* and *practices of gender* (Martin 2006:255). The latter concept is connected to doing gender unintentionally while the first can incorporate more intentional demeaning of women. Some of the leaders who were able to think beyond the 'body count' definition of gender, could mention that male jargon could be defined as one aspect of gender equality. This opens up for a more cultural (rather than statistical) view on gender, but it still treats gender inequality as being a problem of bad values. A more progressive view on gender takes into consideration the practices of gender. It does not sort out 'friends' or 'foes' but rather tries to investigate the processes which we all can be part of, no matter how good intentions we think we carry.

³⁹ In a study by Andersson, Amundsdotter and Svensson (2009) they show that industrial leaders who are eager to create more gender equal workplaces – and are knowledgeable about gender and gender theories – still ask for statistics and other 'hard facts' as tools for convincing others of the need to work with gender equality. These leaders argue that this is the only way of 'reaching' non-gender educated personnel (Andersson, Amundsdotter & Svensson 2009:87).

When the steering group decided to reject the project model presented for them, it was not an intentional move against women or gender equality in the workplace. What they probably saw as the agenda were matters of economy and productivity, rather than matters of gender equality. They were not able to be reflexive about gender since according to the discourse on masculinity they were subjected to, gender was nowhere to be seen at that particular moment. In the individual interviews however the leaders were not as united as male collective sharing the exact same views on gender issues. Some were more progressive, some were quite conservative. The difference between the actions in the meeting, and what they said in interviews, high-lights the fact that the ability to be reflexive about gender is not so much an individual trait, as a mechanism activated differently at different times for different people. Following the example put forward by Martin, we are more reflexive about gender in the morning, when we are putting on our clothes and make-up, judging our appearance in the mirror and strutting off to work, compared to later in the day when we actually work (Martin 2006:257). Leaders certainly need education on gender issues, but education can only help to a certain extent. Gender inequities do not concern only some people. It would be quite easy to make societies more equal if gender inequities were produced by some, at the expense of others. A more realistic approach is rather to acknowledge that we all are potentially part of the processes of making and sustaining gender inequity, even if we think of ourselves as 'enlightened'. This includes the researchers. For example, in our dialogue with the company we noticed that we sometimes iterated their description of the first project model as impossible to carry through due to the economic recession. We ourselves used the recession as a discursive tool to make rational the actions of the company. Perhaps this could be interpreted as an unintended strategy for us to get a dialogue going with company leaders. Had we tried to oppose their definition of the situation, we might have jeopardized access. At the same time however, we thereby sustained the male logic we wished to interrogate.

Conclusions

What we have showed in this article is how the economic recession has affected gender equality work within the engineering industry. We have also tried to shed light on the conditions for conducting interactive, co-productive gender research in the current situation. In the company investigated the economic recession was interpreted through a traditional male discourse. The recession emphasized gender equality as an

unsignificant aspect of the company. Gender equality seemed to offer no way out of the economic crises, but was comprehended more of as an obstacle. This also affected the co-productive research process, high-lighting the fact that access is an on-going process which cannot be expected to be once and for all overcome. Instead it must be understood as a conscious or unconscious constant negotiation between different actors.

What is implied in this article is that co-productive gender research projects must leave room for reflexivity. In interactive research and collaborations between industry and academia, all actors easily get tangled up with one another. Aside from our different professional roles, we are all humans and act as such. We play all sorts of power games (social, emotional, economical, cultural and so forth) during interaction and it can be quite difficult to be reflexive about own and others actions. Gendered practices can hide behind seemingly rational behaviour. The current economic crisis in the engineering industry is also a crisis for a more gender equal work life. Progressive leaders (both in science and in business) should acknowledge that the opposite is also true. That is, the current crises for gender equality also affects business.

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School Leadership in Disadvantaged Contexts: A case study of women principals leading change in Spain

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The interrelationship between socio-economically disadvantaged environments and school failure creates a complex and fragile landscape for school improvement. Even so, some schools facing these difficult and challenging circumstances are able to provide quality education and raise student achievement levels. This article outlines the findings from a one-year qualitative study of women principals' leadership as they work in difficult contexts in Spain. Using in-depth interviews, observations, and fieldnotes, the study focuses on four women principals and how the school community perceives their leadership role. Despite some obstacles encountered by the women, the findings illustrate three key ingredients to creating a work environment that leads to positive change in the principals' schools: 1) social networks; 2) a mutual working relationship with faculty, students and school community members; and 3) democratic and participatory styles of leadership.

Introduction

Social context has been recognized as a powerful variable affecting educational policies and programmes. A complex mix of social, economic and educational factors has helped bring about several educational and economic initiatives to address these difficult problems. There is renewed interest in generating and sustaining improvement in low performing schools and an urgent need to secure ways of raising student achievement in schools located in areas where socio-economic difficulties trouble residents at a higher than average rate (Gray 2004; Hechuan, Creemers & De Jong

2007). However, improvement in these schools can be exceptionally fragile and changes do not always last over time (Harris 2006).

Improving schools and raising their standards of achievement are policy goals in many countries, and they expect to succeed (Harris, Chapman, Muijs, Russ & Stoll 2006; Reynolds, Harris, Clarke, Harris & James 2006). In Spain with the passing of the General Law for Administration Educational System (LOGSE) in 1990, an attempt was made to improve student achievement and raise performance levels, particularly in the elementary and secondary schools. A concerted effort was made by the local, regional, and national governments to raise performance levels through a combination of increased resources, various developmental programmes, and targeted professional development opportunities (OECD 2006; MEC 2007).

A review of the literature uncovers that school improvement in challenging contexts is often dependent on situational factors that can be both internal and external to the institution (Muijs, Harris, Chapman, Stoll & Russ 2004). This interplay of contexts, combined with school level factors, creates a comprehensive framework for effective school improvement. Although the main goals of the schools must be stated in terms of student outcomes, school level factors are equally as important.

In the last few decades issues about leadership have come to be seen as central to efforts focused on improving schools and educational systems in general (Blum & Butler 1989; Everad & Morris 1985; Stego, Gielen, Glatter & Hord 1987). Today's scholars, researchers, and educators agree that leadership is a substantive cultural school-level factor necessary for school improvement (Muijs 2006; Reezigt & Creemers 2005; Wong & Evers 2001). Closely associated to these matters is research focused on school principals and their influence on school improvement (Bamburg & Andrews 1990; Goldring & Pasternak 1994; Hallinger & Heck 1996; Leitner 1994). Specifically, in disadvantaged contexts, research reported successful experiences of principals (Harris & Chapman 2004; Day 2005).

The role of the principal in leading and managing change emerged from much of the research as being a key influence even though the position of the principal differed from country to country (Wikeley, Stoll, Murillo & De Jong 2005: 403). Spain is one of only two OECD countries where school principals are elected from – and also partly by – the teaching staff of each elementary and secondary school, and will return to being one of the teachers after the period of office. Prerequisites for candidature to the

principalship are the same for both women and men. Criteria include having spent five years in the workplace, having completed an in-service course, and having a predefined placement. Still, more than one third of the schools do not have teachers ready to run as candidates (Bolívar & Moreno 2006).

This study, focused on women principals, stresses the importance of internal agency. It examines the leadership roles of school principals who work collectively with the whole school toward successful improvement. However, under-representation of women in positions of administration within educational institutions continues to be a matter of some concern, particularly as the teaching force is largely dominated, nationally and internationally, by women (Cubillo & Brown 2003). In 2009, Spain had a total of 230.288 women as opposed to 64.152 men in pre-primary and primary education teaching positions, while 61.3 percent of men held the position of principal as opposed to only 31.6 percent of women.

Internationally, since the 1980s, there has been an increase in research on gender and school administration, which has documented women's experiences. Studies on women in administration and management process (Blackmore 2004a; Coleman 2003; Díez, Terrón & Anguita 2006; Drake & Owen 1998; Gatenby & Humphries 1999; Hall 1996; Hatcher 2003; Martin & Collinson 2002; Shakeshaft 1987; Skrla 2000; Young & McLeod 2001) have shown that women in management positions work in organizational cultures dominated by masculine visions and models that favour situations of inequality and marginalization. Nevertheless, issues related with educational leadership, such as changes in the school culture and positive change within the school, are recognized as important elements built into the women principals' agendas and are evidenced in their daily experiences (Asplund 1998; Brunner 2002; Coleman 2004; Eagly 2005; Fennell 2002, 2005).

In summary, multi-perspective research focused on leadership, women in educational administration, principalships, and school improvement – particularly in difficult contexts – has shown that a school's internal capacity can be a determinant factor for effective school improvement. The prior research highlights principals' leadership roles in capacity building for school improvement and leading change, in spite of the problems associated with these schools and despite the obstacles that women principals encounter in administrative positions. This article adds to the research and examines four women principals' experiences as they work in schools in disadvantaged contexts. It explores and describes how their leadership roles are revealed as a key feature in the

overall process and how the educational community (i.e., faculty, students, and family members) perceive and describe the work carried out by the principals.

Method

This was a one-year case study of four schools situated in disadvantaged areas of Andalusia, Spain. Located in the southern part of the country, the region has long been characterized by a high index of unemployment and levels of economic and social development below the national average. However, in the last twenty years, it has experienced remarkable growth. Despite these advances we continue to find the following problems in disadvantaged zones: high levels of unemployment; low levels of formal schooling in local adult population; deteriorating urbanization; deficient infrastructure, facilities and public services; as well as public health issues. In combination with these factors schools have problems with high levels of absenteeism and school failures, teacher recruitment and retention, students with diverse ethnic backgrounds creating language barriers, and students entering schools below grade level.

Women principals worked in four pre-primary and primary schools all of which are in what might be described as disadvantage areas. All four schools are supported through initiatives such as the "Education Action Preferential Zone" (EAPZ). All four schools agreed that the EAZ offered them a very important source of assistance, very practical forms of help and support as well as important increases in resources. General characteristics of schools and biographical/professional data of their women principals are shown in table 1.

Table 1: Women Principals and their Schools

| Province | School type | Nº of pupils | Age range | Pupil ethnic minority % | Setting | Nº teachers F/M | Principals | | | | |
|----------|---------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------------|----------|-----------------|------------|---------------|----------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| | | | | | | | Age | Years in post | Years teaching | Previous Principalship | Access to Principalship |
| Cádiz | Pre-primary Primary | 520 | 4-6 6-11 | -25% | Suburban | 22 F 4 M | 45-49 | 4 | +25 | N | Elected |
| Málaga | Pre-primary Primary | 500 | 4-6 6-11 | +25% | Suburban | 14 F 6 M | 50-55 | 4 | +30 | N | Designated |
| Huelva | Pre-primary Primary | 415 | 4-6 6-11 | -25% | Suburban | 18 F 10 M | 45-49 | 8 | +25 | Y | Elected |
| Granada | Pre-primary Primary | 340 | 4-6 6-11 | +50% | Suburban | 9 F 5 M | 45-49 | 8 | +25 | Y | Designated |

This naturalistic qualitative case study provided us with powerful access to schools and staff members' lives (Nicolaidou & Ainscow 2005; Van Maanen 1992). Data for this study were collected through multiple sources. Interview data played an essential role. A total of 48 participants were interviewed. Within each of the four provinces, we realized 4 in-depth interviews with each principal. Additionally, interviews with 16 teachers, 8 students, 4 people with the title of "administrative staff" and 16 family members were conducted. All interviews were tape-recorded and confidentiality was assured. Also, we employed documentary analysis and observations and field notes.

Using narrative and discourse analysis was an ongoing part on the research process. A cross-case thematic analysis (Yin 1993) of the qualitative data was undertaken. Common patterns across the data provided the final thematic framework. Emerging themes were used for synthesizing the information. These themes indicate the intellectual, social, and emotional complexities of the principals' actions, and also provide clear indicators of the understandings, qualities, strategies and skills through which these women manage to improve their schools. Even so, it is also necessary to recognize the differences among the answers of how the principals dealt with school

improvement, as it is a problem that requires great diversity, variety and flexibility in its response.

Findings

Research reports of each case study emphasize the uniqueness of each school's context and of each principal. However, in this paper we present similarities and common ground as a whole. We summarized these patterns in four interconnected themes: 1) Becoming a principal offers an opportunity for school improvement; 2) Relational and social networks with faculty, students, and school community serve as a resource for principals; 3) "You count" policies and leadership styles that are democratic and participatory in nature are hallmarks; and 4) Problems and troubles for the women principals.

1. The principalship: An opportunity for school improvement.

For the participating principals, the decision to become a principal was primarily motivated by a commitment to school improvement, a concern for students, for teaching and learning, and to the overall functioning of the school in general. These women wanted to be principals because they wanted to see their ideas put into action; they wanted to be agents of change regarding schooling and schoolwork (Young & McLeod 2001). Aspects related to salary, status and social recognition were, and remain, secondary.

In all cases we observed the women working toward the "establishment of norms and policies for improvement." This work is complemented with the daily task speaking and listening to the educational community as a collective "each and every day." It is meticulous work that is slow and continual, and involves the assumption of certain commitments, the implementation of initiatives, programmes and projects, and involves different members of the educational community.

Thus, we have observed the development of what could be called "micro-reforms" as a substantive part of the principals' "agendas." We refer to small but significant changes in the functioning of the institutions as a result of the administration, which leads to an improvement of school processes and activities, and in many ways adds balance to

work normally considered bureaucratic and primarily oriented toward "putting out fires."

According to Harris (2006) schools in difficult contexts require a high degree of external support and intervention. Concern for improving the conditions in order to improve learning is taken as a challenge: *"I try to improve my work to improve the [children's] education, to make it attractive, so that low achievement students will find this place to be a pleasant and comfortable place to be, where they can learn and stay motivated to learn"* (School Principal Case 4).

Despite the problems encountered in practice, the women are usually insistent and persevering when it comes to obtaining the necessary external support to improve student learning: *"I have to be attentive and always on the lookout for resources and assistance to improve the school knowing that when the school functions at its best it is for the benefit of the whole community"* (School Principal Case 1).

2. Relational and social networks with faculty, students, and school community serve as a resource for women principals

The female principals develop visionary and creative responses to social circumstances, actively engaging in and promoting social justice in their environments. They are people-centred and provide moral support to the members of school community. They demonstrate involvement in resolving student problems (both academic and social), interaction with families, and integration with their communities.

The principals try to achieve the necessary balance between the demands and needs of the various groups, especially with regards to the relationship between the faculty and the educational authority, and between the faculty and the families. These relationships unfold on a horizontal plane. This 'lateral capacity building' (Fullan 2006: 116) is a powerful strategy: *"To generate a good atmosphere among your colleagues and peers you need peace, mediation, flexibility, consensus, and you need to forget what you want and attend to others. That is what is important. Your perspective, your opinion should come last. One must listen because that also enriches your own perspective"* (School Principal Case 1).

Recognition of the role of interpersonal relationships to promote a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere at work is reflected in the attention to the smallest of details (Samier, Bates & Stanley 2006). For example, in the case of Cadiz, the attention to detail can be evidenced in the “fine-tuning” of the cleanliness and in the organization, which can be observed in both the physical appearance as well as in the processes and dynamics of the school functioning. In Malaga, specific attention is given to the care of the building: the presence of plants gives a distinctive air and comfortable feel to the school.

Our female participants cultivate an atmosphere of caring built around relationships. Moreover, they facilitate the social climate of the institution; they act as mediators for conflict resolution between faculty and students, and when conflicts arise among the students themselves. The relationship with the students at the schools has been quite remarkable. The principals who participated in the study tend to maintain a close and cordial bond with the student body, taking interest in the issues and particular circumstances that affect the students.

Women principals prefer frequent contact and information sharing. They construct what Hegelson (1990) calls a “web of inclusion” where strong connections exist between all members of the educational community, dialogue is ongoing, and information is disseminated in all directions. This facilitates a process of shared decision-making.

The degree of collaboration is a powerful indicator of a school’s capacity to improve. However, in these schools, collaboration and involvement with families becomes more complicated (Hiatt-Michael 2003). In many circumstances a strong connection has not been established between the homes and school. Even so, the principals participating in the study are committed to involving the families in the administration of the institutions. And according to the principal of Malaga, that goal requires “*long and hard work*” (*School Principal, Case 3*). In Huelva, one teacher expressed her desire for a closer union between home and school, to increase parental involvement. With this goal in mind, the principal works very hard on the issue, given that “*parents don’t value schoolwork enough*” (*School Teacher Case 1*).

3. ‘You count’ policies and leadership styles that are democratic and participatory in nature as hallmarks

In the Spanish educational system, in addition to the principal, two other people the principal hires assist in carrying out the daily functioning of each school: one is in charge of curriculum and instruction while the other deals with administrative issues. As a group, the three constitute a “leadership team” (administrative team), but this does not mean they are forced to work as a team. However, as dynamic agents of the schools activities, the principals in this study were very aware of the advantages of working as a team, and that team management includes delegating responsibility to others and working closely with others.

Women principals often promote a somewhat kinder, more socially compassionate version of organizational goals and social policies, and place more emphasis on democratic relationships, participatory decision-making, delegation, and team-based leadership skills (Eagly 2005). The principals in our study actively try to develop democratic and participatory management styles, involving the various groups on a horizontal plane, or on equal footing, regarding school policies with constructive goals that serve the common good. The outcomes provide value for the common good rather than the satisfaction of narrow, personal, or even greedy interests (Davies 2007; Thompsom & Blackmore 2006).

The administrative styles observed and perceived by the members of the educational community are described as “close,” “direct,” and “responsive to the people.” Flexibility, accessibility, creativity, along with the ability to share in the search for solutions to problems, mediate, and tackle problems without creating confrontations are also defining characteristics of the women principals' administrative styles. They are principals who are “visible” and “available” (they do not close themselves up in their offices). They are viewed as mediators who listen, consult, and dialogue with the different groups (faculty, students, families, etc.) and leaders who play a key role in the functioning of their school.

Another distinctive feature of women's leadership styles is recognizing that emotions provide a cornerstone for collective action (Beatty 2002; Blackmore 2004b; Reger 2004). The participating women principals develop policies evidencing mutual support and caring, creating “structures of feelings” (Zembylas 2002). One teacher in Granada stated, *“The principal is very effective at administering and using the affective realm*

– *using her own feelings and affections, as well as those of others, to prevail with a sense of caring*” (Teacher School Case 4).

4. Problems and troubles for the women principals

This positive description of the principals' work does not represent the complete picture, for the job is not without its difficulties. Consistent with prior research (e.g. Keene & Reynolds 2005; Osnowitz 2005; Perrone, Webb & Blalock 2005), role conflict and other social and cultural barriers exert a substantive influence over the women. Taking care of household responsibilities takes time away from the profession.

Moreover, the existence of an organizational culture that values teaching over administrative activities negatively impacts the decision to stay in the administrative position. To the women, teaching is more important from a professional point of view and more rewarding from the personal viewpoint in all aspects. Many practicing principals opt to leave administration in favour of classroom teaching (Newton, Giesen, Freeman, Bishop & Zeitoun 2003).

Lack of involvement, collaboration, and support of faculty is one area of concern. Even though the women claim to have the support of their colleagues, their peers are the ones who are most critical of the principals' work when compared to the other groups (families, students, educational authority). At times, the principals have felt the tension created by the discrepancy between the “masculine culture” of educational institutions and the numerical dominance of women in the preschool and elementary schools studied.

Time commitment expected is heavy. Expectations for the principals to complete paperwork, supervise after-school activities, market the school, generate financial support, and work with social agencies largely account for the increased number of hours worked, and have overloaded their workday and their role (Newton et. al. 2003).

Concluding comments

Ultimately, the cases presented show a very positive assessment of administrative activities carried out by the women principals and their impact on improving the

functioning of schools in disadvantaged zones. Women principals combine strong internal accountability measures with a collaborative school culture as a means to improve their schools and for developing professional autonomous relationships. Moreover, they managed successful external support for generating positive change and development. Additionally, the cases illustrate specific leadership styles put into practice – ones that have a solid democratic and participatory base, quite distinct from the more technical and bureaucratic models. In the cases studied, we can associate the principalship with educational leadership capable of transforming educational institutions and making them settings for the development of collaboration among various groups.

The women's leadership styles, developed to emphasize the democratic and participatory component of their administration, incorporate a moral and emotional dimension into the process without diminishing their effectiveness and results. This leadership style contributes to the establishment of a more humanized environment that is more creative, thereby benefiting the schools, where the needs and current dynamics demand new leadership and administrative styles.

There is a need to raise awareness, and of equal importance, recognize the principals' work in schools in difficulty, their good administrative practices, and their contributions to the understanding how to improve educational institutions that this group has been developing in their daily work as professionals. This way of working and administering can serve as an example for other organizations concerned with the improvement and professional development of its members.

Heroic efforts and incredible efforts by school staff and school community may not be sufficient in disadvantaged contexts. These schools have to exceed “normal” efforts to secure improvement. They have to work much harder to achieve and maintain the same performance levels as schools in more privileged areas. But these achievements need to be described and celebrated.

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IDAS: A program to increase the number of women leaders in Swedish higher education

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IDAS (Identification, Development, Advancement and Support) is a model whose chief aim is to prepare women through a variety of activities and procedures for access to leading posts in universities and colleges.⁴⁰ A variant of the original US American IDAS, the Swedish version is designed specifically for Swedish universities and colleges. It is a four-year project whose goal is to encourage the recruitment of women to leading academic posts and has mainly focused on promoting more applications by women candidates for posts as vice-chancellor of universities and colleges. IDAS was adopted as a project framework because its pedagogic concepts coincided with the Swedish project's main aims, although it has gradually developed to include other issues, such as the conditions of academic leadership in general. The project was funded by the Development Council for the Government Sector from 2003 to 2007 and is unique in that for the first time it succeeded in persuading all Swedish universities and colleges to collaborate in a co-ordinated, long-term project aimed at achieving common goals.

A network for women in academic leadership

In the autumn of 1999, the Swedish Higher Education Association (SUHF) appointed a working party to study ways of increasing the presence of women in higher education who had the capacity to compete for leading academic positions. This came in response to the preoccupying fact that the numbers of women vice-chancellors were once again

⁴⁰ Inspiration for the pedagogic construction of the project around the four words "identification", "development", "advancement" and "support" came from the USA where the model is used within the *Office for Women in Higher Education (OWHE)* – a system of networks working in favour of women leadership within the academic world. OWHE was created in 1973 and forms part of *The American Council of Education (ACE)* – the coordinating body of all USA schools of higher education. The web page of OWHE is found under <http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ProgramsServices/sOWHE/OWHE.main1.htm> (visited June 14, 2007). The ACE web address is <http://www.acenet.edu> (visited June 14, 2007).

falling, after a period of greater balance between men and women in these academic posts. The working party was created on the initiative of vice-chancellor Ingegerd Palmér, who became, and still is, its first president.⁴¹

Its activities commenced in August 2000 with the creation of a national network for women leaders interested in promoting academic leadership amongst colleagues of the same sex. The network meets twice a year; the programme for each meeting is usually as follows:

A talk followed by activities focusing on personal development.

A talk followed by discussion of conditions in academic leadership and university policies in the broadest sense.

The presence of a “surprise guest” in the role of model leader (these guests are usually women but men have also been invited from time to time).

Time for free networking amongst the participants.

About 50 participants generally attend these meetings, and continuity is very satisfactory.

The project expands and IDAS is created

As the network developed, it became obvious that there was an increasing need to expand the project to include broader, more comprehensive activities geared towards more fundamental changes. This became possible thanks to funding by the Development Council for the Government Sector in the spring of 2003. The aim was to create a Swedish IDAS as a structural tool, as opposed to the US American IDAS, which is based on individual adjustment. These changes in perspective came about gradually and implied a focus shift from concern mainly for individuals to including the fundamental structures of academic leadership. The IDAS concept involved an uncomplicated project structure that was easy to present and work with.

Early on, it was seen as essential that Swedish universities and colleges should become involved in the project, should contribute financially and assume local responsibility for

⁴¹ The network and the IDAS project were coordinated the years 2000-2007 by Kerstin Lagerström.

the process. They were already under pressure to appoint more women to academic posts, since the government had by this time fixed a ratio for women professors. To counteract what was seen as government intervention, universities and colleges would have to take initiatives of their own. Once academic institutions became more involved, the project again underwent changes: from concerning itself solely with women's leadership, it was now more oriented towards promoting academic leadership as a whole.

About the same time as the IDAS project came into being, several women vice-chancellors were appointed, thus halting the negative trend previously mentioned. The real break-through, however, was still to come, that is, when an outgoing woman vice-chancellor was replaced by another woman at institutions other than university art colleges. This finally happened in 2006-2007, when three outgoing women vice-chancellors were succeeded by women.

Once funding from the Development Council had been approved, two reference groups were set up to canvass support for the project amongst university and college vice-chancellors and the trade unions. A project web page was also created – www.idas.nu – with information on all the project's activities, people involved in the project, papers published, etc. IDAS now had its own logo, designed in consultation with the network of women academic leaders.

IDAS: networks, working groups, sub-projects, etc.

IDAS in time developed a wide range of networks, working groups, sub-projects and other activities, including the following:

New networks were gradually generated within the national network of women academic leaders. In certain parts of the country, members of the national network set up regional networks to target those women who could not be included at national level to invite them to join IDAS. A network for women deputy vice-chancellors was also created, but the turnover in that particular network was so rapid that continuity was negatively affected and its activities gradually petered out after a couple of years.

An innovative idea was the creation of a new project: a network for young, future heads of administration. Heads of administration/university directors were asked to send a

man and a woman under the age of 40 to participate in the project - in theory bypassing the project's original target group – in the belief that our young people are the future and thus it was essential to foster an awareness of the need for shared power and equality in upcoming generations of young, male administrative staff. (Young men, incidentally, are in short supply in university and college administration, where as far as the equality problem is concerned, the tables are turned.) There are now two networks, which meet once a semester; participants are encouraged to pursue leadership careers and many of them have in fact found new administrative leadership posts within and outside the academic field.

Another strategically vital group to become involved in the IDAS project were student representatives, who were contacted through the network created specifically for women in this category in 2005.

One of the IDAS project's first priorities was to promote research into academic leadership in Sweden. A working group organised a seminar for researchers, leadership developers and other academics interested in leadership matters for the purpose of bringing together a group of interested researchers after the seminar and applying for funds for a research programme on academic leadership. For a variety of reasons, unfortunately, this venture was unsuccessful.

Within the network for women academic leaders a working group was formed to discuss the meaning, now and for the future, of academic leadership, while focusing on the role and tasks of vice-chancellors. This group consists of women with wide-ranging experience of academic leadership posts, who themselves have taken part in the selection of new vice-chancellors. Their report, *Akademiskt ledarskap nu och i framtiden*, was published by IDAS.⁴²

When new vice-chancellors were to be appointed at a number of universities, the IDAS union reference group met in conference with the unions as it was thought essential that the latter should be involved in these appointments and be familiar with the selection process. The trade union reference group designed a questionnaire for all participants in IDAS networks and groups. However, from the trade union point of view, the questionnaire came up with some rather depressing results. The unions in universities and colleges had not been given importance in the work of IDAS. Most of

⁴² Fahlgren, Margaretha, Norén, Kerstin and Sandström, Birgitta (2007) *Akademiskt ledarskap nu och i framtiden. Fokus på rektorsrekrytering*.

the vice-chancellors are now convinced of how important it is to monitor the careers of women in leading posts in academic institutions. Trade union representatives, nevertheless, still have to be reminded of this at every new appointment.

A sub-project, a one-year tutorial programme, was initiated to contribute to increasing the number of young women who might be considering a career in academic leadership. Participants attended three meetings in Stockholm and paired-off tutors and students later continued to meet in their respective institutions, although contacts between tutors and students were principally by e-mail and telephone.

Mapping the distribution of research funds

Access to research grants is vital to an advanced academic career, so IDAS decided to discover how many women researchers apply for, and receive, grants from the most important research funding organisations in Sweden.⁴³ The results of the study showed, in the first place, that fewer women researchers than men actually applied for funds, while even fewer women leaders in research centres did so. It also showed that women applicants were less represented than their male colleagues in the field of life science/medicine. Not only that, it also became evident that more women candidates than men were eliminated at various stages in the application process and that this negative selection started in the institutions themselves, where internal selection limits the number of applications presented to funding organisations. This negative selection is by no means “invisible”; the selection process is in fact comprehensive and transparent. The results, however, are extremely disheartening, as they demonstrate beyond a shadow of doubt that women applicants are less likely to receive research grants than men and that they are also eliminated, more or less consciously, more frequently than their male colleagues during the application process. This obviously makes it more difficult for women to make their way in any career towards leadership in the academic world.

⁴³ *Ansökningar till strategiska forskningscentra. En jämförande undersökning av könsfördelningen i ansökningar till strategiska forskningscentra respektive traditionella projektbidrag.* The study was compiled by Beata Nervik, researcher in systems analysis, and is found on www.idas.nu under the heading Strategiska centra I and II. The following calls for proposals were studied:

- Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research (SSF), Strategic research centres I and II
- The Swedish Research Council's call for proposals from the “Linné support”
- The Swedish Research Council's grants to Strong research environments
- The Swedish Research Council's and Vinnova's call for proposals for Berzelii Centra
- Vinnova's call for proposals for VINN Excellence Central 2003 and 2005
- The Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning (Forma's) call for proposals for FormelExc.
- The Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research's call for proposals to FAS-centra
- The Swedish Research Council's call for proposals to individual researchers for defined research as well as SSF's Individual Grant for the Advancement of Research Leaders I and II.

International survey

IDAS maintained international contacts through study visits and invitations to present work towards improving women's prospects of becoming leaders within the academic field and efforts towards influencing and changing existing structures to colleagues in other European countries. These international contacts also promote the exchange of knowledge and experience with foreign universities working towards creating equal opportunities for men and women to pursue academic careers. Furthermore, IDAS hosted visiting colleagues from South Africa, Australia, China and Norway.

A report on European perspectives on academic leadership was published on the latest events and sources of debate in the academic world in other countries: higher education in Europe, research into academic leadership and the selection of leaders in these countries, the qualifications required of these leading academics and formal conditions during and after their term of office.⁴⁴

The project's Grande Finale

A grand closing banquet for the IDAS project was held in the Blue Hall of Stockholm's City Hall on 8 March 2007. All vice-chancellors were invited and most of them made an appearance. Members of the women's academic network had also invited personalities who, each in their own way, were important models: ambassadors, decision-makers and moulders of public opinion on leadership and leadership development as well as equal opportunities in career development for men and women.

Amongst the speakers were the Minister for Higher Education and Research Lars Lejonborg and The Minister for Integration and Gender Equality Nyamko Sabuni. During the evening, eight distinctions were awarded to institutions and individuals who had made a particularly noteworthy contribution to promoting equal opportunities for men and women in their academic careers. The culmination of the evening came with the presentation of a manifest to the vice-chancellors of all Swedish universities and colleges. In it was expressed the essence of the experience and wisdom generated by the IDAS project, in four concise but meaningful messages:

In the first place, women!

⁴⁴ Marcusson, Lena (2007) *Det akademiska ledarskapet. Några europeiska perspektiv*.

Contribute to women's success!

Women only have to be as good as men!

Be brave!

Final reflections

The problems inherent to the historically patriarchal environment of the academic world and the numerous obstacles which handicap women's prospects of acceding to high-level posts in universities and colleges are well known.⁴⁵ The most significant aspect of the Swedish IDAS project was the fact that it became nationwide – eventually every university and college in Sweden was involved. The project focused on establishing solid structures for work towards promoting more women to leading posts within the academic world and initiating efforts to increase professionalism amongst academic leaders in general. The project had clear and definite objectives: to identify and develop individuals and processes so as to benefit academic leadership as a whole. Its main aim was, of course, to encourage suitable women candidates to advance within the system and to ensure that they receive the support they need to dare to do so, and, once they occupied leading posts, to continue to support them and facilitate their work as qualified leaders.

IDAS became an arena where local projects, courses and other activities involving women's career opportunities and commitment in leading positions and persons from the various institutions could be brought together, get to know one another and thus become stronger, the importance of which cannot be too strongly stressed. Assembly and continuity are essential to a project aimed at breaking down opposition, promoting change and building new, sustainable strategies and structures for the future. IDAS created this assembly and hopefully continuity will come in the wake of its efforts. Last but not least, the usefulness and effectiveness of regional networks, together with the development of competitiveness and the exchange of knowledge IDAS created, must be self-evident in times when the need for concentrated effort and collaboration, wider environments and increased competitiveness is constantly emphasised.

⁴⁵ See, for example, Husu, Liisa (2005) *Dold könsdiskriminering på akademiska arenor – osynligt, synligt, subtilt*. Report 2005:41R from the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education.

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What about Gender Justice in Higher Education? The case of universities in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany

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Introduction

Talking about leadership and gender often means talking about women in leading positions. What I want to do in this paper is something different. I want to examine in how far the conditions of leadership play a role in the realization of gender equality or – to use a more comprehensive construct – gender justice in higher education, in this case in the universities in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany.

The most renowned strategy used for this task in the realm of German universities and – to be more ‘European’ – in the construction of a European Research Area is Gender Mainstreaming. Basing on the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) of the European Union which stressed the need for equality between men and women Gender Mainstreaming was acknowledged and implemented as strategy for gender equality in the EU research policy by communications of the European Commission (e.g. European Commission 1999) as well as by several reports of female experts (e.g. European Commission 2000). One important feature of Gender Mainstreaming concerning leadership is it being a top-down-strategy (Rees 1998; Woodward 2004). The concept includes the notion that the clear and explicit commitment of the leading persons and/or functions to gender equality and Gender Mainstreaming leads to the transformation of the whole organization in the long run because all the units of the organization have to put this commitment into action. That means being a top-down-strategy is seen as a great advantage of Gender Mainstreaming which then demands a clearly defined hierarchical structure of leadership.

Admittedly, this hope for a fundamental transformation of science and research (policy) towards more gender equality has not been fulfilled yet (Schäfer 2005) although there are to be found increases of the proportions of women on different levels (European

Commission 2009). In fact, in the “Gender-Report”, the study I am referring to, we did not find any systematic approach at any of the North Rhine-Westphalian universities to implementing gender equality that embraced every single unit of the university and tied them all together in a coherent process. Such a process is necessary from my point of view to achieve gender justice in a broad sense which includes ideas of participation and democracy and which refers to the conception that every individual should be treated in a way that allows for her or his flourishing (cf. Nussbaum 2000; Walker 2002). Although this philosophical concept is not very common yet in the context of higher education in Western Europe but rather in the context of development policy or studies (cf. Nyamu-Musembi 2007) it seems to be helpful for conceptualizing the modes of the implementation of gender equality without ontologising them by trying to adjust women (and men) to these modes.

In this paper I try to shed light on the relations between leadership, Gender Mainstreaming and gender justice. Therefore, I firstly introduce into the “Gender-Report” (1). I then describe some structures of leadership in German universities (2) and discuss some of the results of the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming (3). Afterwards, I show some more detailed results of our qualitative study concerning Gender Action Plans as monitoring instruments (4) and their effects (5). Finally, I try to read these results in the light of gender justice.

Introduction into Gender-Report

In this paper I present some selected results of the “Gender-Report” which is conducted by the Netzwerk Frauenforschung NRW, the network of women scientists in gender studies in North Rhine-Westphalia, and is still work in progress. The Gender-Report is supposed to state the level of gender justice that has been reached by the universities and the universities of applied science in North Rhine-Westphalia. North Rhine-Westphalia is the biggest federal state of Germany and the one with the most – that is to say 26 – universities and universities of applied science.

What does gender justice mean in this context? We focus on two issues: on the one hand equal representation of women and men on all levels and on the other hand gender equality as a coherent strategy in all organizational units of the university. Thus, our study consists of two main parts: first a quantitative analysis of statistical data on

the proportions of women and men on the different levels of the universities, but also on the level of the disciplines. Additionally, we compare the situation in the single discipline and the single university to the situation in other disciplines and universities in North Rhine-Westphalia, but also in other federal states of Germany.

The second part of the study, and the one which I mostly refer to, is a qualitative analysis of central documents, measures and projects concerning gender equality of the universities and the faculties. These are for example the university statutes, the mission statements of the universities, the agreements on objectives between the ministry and the university or gender action plans, which have to be done by every faculty according to the so-called *Landesgleichstellungsgesetz* ⁴⁶. This is the law that is supposed to ensure gender equality in all institutions and organizations of the federal state. In this law there are included some of the core concepts of Gender Mainstreaming, like using a language that considers women and men, like budgeting that considers gender issues, and what is especially important for the Gender-Report, gender action plans as a monitoring instrument. And in fact, the central documents of most North Rhine-Westphalian universities show an explicit commitment to the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming.

Leadership in German universities

Talking about leadership in universities causes problems because in universities, at least in Germany, we find roughly speaking two parallel institutional paths which are more or less formal: first the university administration and second what I will call the ‘network of scientists’, including the faculties, the scientific institutes and departments and also the single professors with their chairs.

Although both structures are headed by the rectorate, they follow different logics concerning decision-making. The central university administrations don’t differ very much from other public administrations. That means, they have a strong and clearly defined hierarchy with the chancellor at the top and the heads of departments as a middle management followed by clerks, secretaries, workers and so on. The logic of their actions bases on organizational or managerial procedures where the head of the

⁴⁶ http://www.mgffi.nrw.de/pdf/frauen/lgg_gleich.pdf

organization issues the strategic line and the (hierarchically) following staff translates this into single work steps, 'milestones' and so on.

The case of the 'network of scientists' seems to be even more direct but in its modes of negotiations it is a bit more complicated. It begins at the very top of the university with the rector and the vice-rectors who are elected scientists from the group of the professors of the university. They head the whole university, i.e. the central administration and also the faculties. But this is a kind of a formal leadership because in decision-making the faculties, institutes and professors very often refer more to their disciplines and hence to the logics of the 'scientific field' than to their university, as we can see from the results of the "Gender-Report". This makes it difficult to see who is in authority, for example for the concrete procedures of implementing Gender Mainstreaming. Of course, the deans and professors in the faculties have to follow the broad strategic line of the rectorate. But in their argumentations concerning gender equality they often refer to the logics of their academic disciplines which they describe as needs of a meritocratic system. And since the people in the rectorate are also professors they follow the same belief in the authority of the scientific disciplines. This authority is not questioned, neither by the hierarchy of the organization nor by democratic conceptions about the equal or just representation of women.

Today we have an average of 15,3% female professors at universities in North Rhine-Westphalia which is quite below the average of the EU countries of about 20% (European Commission 2009). But professors and chairs do not just appear from nowhere. The decision how a chair is denominated and who will be appointed is made in the committees of the faculties (although the rectorate has a right to intervene). The equal opportunity commissioner of the university is allowed to take part in this process by law but the denomination of a chair is negotiated in terms of competition inside the disciplinary field in most cases and not in terms of enabling gender equality among professors who are very often separated in more male and more female dominated areas of a discipline, an interrelation Bourdieu refers to as the homology between different social spaces (Bourdieu 1984: 175ff). That means the decision about the denomination of a chair might implicitly also be a decision about the probability of appointing a man or a woman for it and, thus, a decision about future members of the 'network of scientists'.

This example shows that the faculties are central units for implementing gender equality in the university because inside the single faculty the university as an organization and the social field of the discipline are overlapping layers.

Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming and its results

Gender Mainstreaming as the favourite strategy of a gender equality policy and as a top-down-strategy is applicable to the *central university administration* because it is quite clear who is in authority over whom. Furthermore, the gender equality commissioner is attached – at least formally – to this administration in most North Rhine-Westphalian universities. Although other studies in Germany have shown that this commitment does not mean that the university leaders know what Gender Mainstreaming is about (cf. Kahlert 2007), this commitment at least helps in some respects. For example, it helps to introduce forms of work like teleworking which support women – and theoretically men – in arranging work and family life. Or it can lead to the evaluation of work that is done mainly by women, for example by secretaries, in order to upgrade their working positions and thus their payment. Thus, the proportion of women in the best paid salary groups is quite high in the university administration. It averages about 40% in the universities.

We also find a lot of improvements of the child care institutions, consulting services and guidance for parents, information on the participation in a famous audit for a family-friendly university etc. That means measures which follow a strategy of connecting gender equality policy with family policy that researchers also found in other socio-political fields in Germany (cf. Lewalter, Geppert & Baer 2009; Trappe 2009).

The only measures that try to include the scientific field on the level of the whole university are mentoring programmes for young female scientists which are offered at most universities. This is not very astonishing since the faculties are the units that are mainly deemed responsible for the employment, education and training of scientists and researchers. According to the *Landesgleichstellungsgesetz* of North Rhine-Westphalia (see above) they have to provide gender action plans which serve to implement Gender Mainstreaming on the level of the faculties.

Gender action plans as monitoring instrument

As I mentioned before, we regard the faculties as the organizational units where the strategic line of the university leaders has to be realized on the one hand. On the other hand they are the units that connect the university and the disciplinary fields. So we take a closer look at the gender action plans in our study because they are the only documents that show what happens in the faculties concerning gender equality. The matters of the gender action plan are measures for the support of gender equality, the compatibility of work and family and the reduction of the underrepresentation of women. Therefore, it has to contain a quantitative survey of the proportions of women and men on all levels of the faculty and clear goals for the development in the next three years. And they have to show which measures the institution takes to reach these goals. If it is becoming obvious that these goals will not be reached during these three years there have to be taken additional measures according to the law. And the institution has to account for the refusal of women's applications as long as women are underrepresented in this institution. This means, the gender action plans could be wonderful monitoring instruments for Gender Mainstreaming. But they show the same problems like Gender Mainstreaming on the whole: They are what we call in German "zahnlose Tiger", toothless tigers, because in fact they are evaluated after three years by the faculty itself in the following gender action plan but no sanctions are taken if the faculty does not reach the announced goals.

The measures and projects we find in the gender action plans are mostly measures of positive action for women, such as special scholarships for women, financial support for the attendance of conferences, workshops for presentation techniques for example or for time management, mentoring programmes and so on. And there are lots of declarations of intent for example to actively look for women who can apply for a vacant professorship or not to accept sexual discrimination of women or to use gender adequate language.

However, since external evaluation is lacking we do not know if all these measures really help. Indeed, the proportions of women have increased on all levels during the last years but we do not exactly know why: because of the measures or because women get the higher grades at school or because of other reasons. What we know is that there is a certain degree of resistance inside the faculties against measures of Gender Mainstreaming or gender equality. And therefore, I want to go deeper into the world of the 'network of scientists' and have a closer look at how the faculties justify why they

are not able to appoint more female professors, that means female leaders, role models for young female scientists etc. Here are three examples of argumentative figures we found in different gender action plans.

First Example: University of Cologne, Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences

“The faculty still tries to employ and promote women preferentially if they exhibit the same adequacy and capability or merit. But for preserving a top position in international research and teaching it has still to be imperative, that it is the merit of the single scientist in the first line that is crucial for the allocation of a position.”

What we find here is a hint to so-called gender neutral merits of the disciplines that goes along with the idea of a neutral and objective science that has already been rejected by gender researchers like Sandra Harding (1991) or Evelyn Fox Keller (1995) and others. But obviously the members of this faculty who wrote the gender action plan continue to assume that the qualifications of women could be inconsistent with the alleged needs for merits of its disciplines.

Second example: TU Dortmund, Faculty of Electrical and Communication Engineering

“The engineering sciences are surely not accounted a male domain because men do not let women in their circles, but they stay typical male study programmes because women – for what reasons ever – do not choose them.”

Here again we find a hint that it is the women who are responsible for their lacking in some disciplines. In contrast to the first example the reason for that presented in this citation is not a lack of qualifications but simply the obscurity of women’s minds.

Third example: University of Münster, Faculty of Law

“The habilitation is accounted incompatible with starting a family by many women. In doing so they do not quote the scientific profile of qualification as a main problem, but rather the uncertainty, if and at which university they get a chair afterwards. Many of them view the unavoidable geographical separation from a likewise employed partner as incompatible with their family goals.”

Here we find two reasons why the faculty cannot be able to get more women into an academic career. The habilitation, which is a second qualification thesis after the PhD and is still necessary in many disciplines to get a chair in Germany, causes the problem of uncertainty because after a long period of education the researchers do not know if and where they will be employed. And the possible separation of their life partner in this period deters them from pursuing family plans. Again the faculty is not to blame because the reasons for the lack of women lie outside of their scope of responsibility.

But who is to blame then? From the perspective of the faculties it is either the formal organization of the academic profession or the women themselves. But it's definitely not the scientific or disciplinary culture that has to be transformed in order to get more women into it. This culture seems to be sacrosanct.

Effects?

Most of the argumentations and the measures concerning Gender Mainstreaming target the improvement of female scientists to make them suit the necessities of a scientific career. That means, women have to adjust to the academic or the disciplinary culture because this is never questioned, even when a faculty realizes that it has severe problems because of its disciplinary culture, for example problems to get enough students. The logic of the measures for gender equality taken in the university administrations and the faculties implicitly follows human capital oriented approaches and therefore fits all the other new management tools very well, that have been applied in the last years to the universities (see for UK universities Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007). And in fact some universities have begun to connect gender equality with the departments for human resource development by now.

But as we can see from the examples of argumentative figures the faculties are rather untouched by these Gender Mainstreaming tools if we want to detect hints for an aspired transformation of the disciplinary culture. On the contrary, when they try to justify why they have a lack of female scientists they switch over to argumentations of human capital approaches and mingle them with their belief in a meritocratic, objective and gender-neutral science.

In most of the faculties, and that doesn't only mean faculties of natural science and engineering, this belief is still alive. At the same time they borrow ideas of human resource management in their staffing policy as they try to make female scientists fit into the labour market of science—despite the fact that women often reach better grades than men. And they are perfectly in line with the argumentations of the European Commission in doing so (European Commission 1999, 2000). Both logics, the logic of the scientific field as well as the logic of the market, are logics that tend to create inequality as studies about elites for example remarkably prove (cf. Hartmann 2006; Kraus 2001).

What about gender justice?

And here I want to turn back to the main issue of my paper: what about gender justice in higher education? When Gender Mainstreaming was introduced as a coherent strategy for gender equality in the European Union it held the expectation of a transformative potential and thus of the transformation of science and society in a more gender just way in the long run. What we find in our study on the universities and universities of applied science in North Rhine-Westphalia is the commitment of the university leaders to Gender Mainstreaming, but no systematic approach to implement gender equality on all levels of the university, not to mention a moral philosophical approach like gender justice. What we need is a more comprehensive conception of gender justice in higher education that allows for different concepts of scientific work and its reflection.

Melanie Walker (2002: 3) offers such a conception when she explains the connection between justice and education focussing on the widening of social participation. She points to the discrepancy of notions of justice on the one hand and notions of human capital on the other: “We thus urgently need conceptual resources to produce a

language of justice for higher education and society, precisely because there are competing possibilities to understand a pedagogy of/for widening participation—either as a matter of justice, access and transformation, or economically driven by the demands of the knowledge economy and the language of markets, choice, accountability and so on.” (Walker 2002: 3) If we think that way about scientific work, that means if we conceptualize scientific work not as an end in itself, but as a means to achieve human flourishing we find out very soon that widening participation in the fields of scientific production does not only imply to “[mobilise] women to enrich European research” (European Commission 1999) or to give women equal chances like men to get into leading positions in science but to transform science itself and its results by including men and women with their – sometimes similar, sometimes different – perspectives towards the world. If it is true that “as a social practice education is fundamentally about what we learn to be as much as about what knowledge we acquire” (Walker 2002: 2) it becomes obvious that we have to take seriously the decisions of well educated and highly qualified women who choose not to pursue a scientific career in the current academic world that is still dominated by a specific and exclusive male culture with the features we all know (cf. Kraiss 2000). In this light it neither seems very just nor very effective to expect from women that they adjust to the conditions of this male dominated world in order to get a leading job in science. What the studied measures of Gender Mainstreaming are about is questioning the ability of women (and sometimes of men, too) to make the right choices for their (professional) life. What they do not achieve is the questioning of the conditions, the logics and mechanisms of the scientific field in order to widen participation. If we start the reflection of the scientific world from this point, from its own structures, logics, mechanisms etc., then perhaps we get the chance to develop ideas how to change it in a way that women and men are able to find a good life in this world, that means a life they have reason to value.

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“Excellentia”: A Programme to increase the share of women in leading positions in Austrian Universities

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Introduction

Women in Austria – as in the majority of other countries in Europe – have long since overtaken men when it comes to participation in education and educational results. In this respect, the level of participation of women in further education is clearly a success story: over half of all students at Austrian universities are women, almost half of all research staff are women and over 40 % of university staff are women. But women tend to study different subjects than men. They outnumber their male counterparts in administrative posts, yet remain in the minority in the upper echelons of academia. This is despite the enormous increase in the number of qualified women and the fact that women technically have equal access to all academic posts. And also despite the numerous measures introduced to promote the advancement of women and reduce gender-related discrimination.⁴⁷ The existing policy mix includes individual grants for women at different stages of their academic careers (e.g. doctoral or postdoc scholarships, contributions towards publishing costs), structural measures (e.g. the establishment of working committees on equal treatment in universities) and a range of supplementary measures intended to change the general conditions for women in academia and research (e.g. the provision of childcare facilities at universities, the creation of networking opportunities or counselling programmes to change gender-specific degree choice).

Although these policies led to more women participating in higher education and an increasing number of women achieving a *habilitation*, i.e. the qualification required to hold the rank of professor at an Austrian university, the proportion of female professors

⁴⁷ Since the 1990s, a wide range of measures have been introduced to reduce the levels of discrimination against women in academia, science and research. The effects of those measures initiated and/or implemented by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research were analysed in a comprehensive study (cf. Wroblewski et al. 2007).

scarcely changed. Since no measures were in place to support women in the process of taking up a professorship, a new programme was established by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research to help close this “gap in the policy landscape”: the *excellencia* programme.

excellencia was implemented in 2005 – a time of fundamental change for universities in Austria following the coming into effect of the Universities Act 2002. Under the terms of this Act, universities became autonomous establishments and were accorded wide-reaching financial sovereignty and freedom in the appointment of staff. They were now no longer governed by ministerial directives, but by performance agreements concluded between each individual university and the Federal Government. The Act also changed the situation regarding the advancement of women in academia, since although universities are now legally required to implement measures to promote women, they are at liberty to decide for themselves how they actually go about doing so.

The Programme

Excellencia concept

The *excellencia* concept was presented in September 2004 by the Minister of Science. The programme was initiated by the Advisory Committee on Women’s Issues⁴⁸ who programme a solution based on a similar programme implemented in Switzerland⁴⁹ from 2000 to 2003.

The aim of the *excellencia* programme is to double the proportion of female professors in Austria from 8 % (in 2003) to 16 % in 2010 by taking advantage of the window of opportunity created by the age profile of professors in Austrian universities. This is formulated in the *excellencia* strategy document as follows: “Over the next 5 years around 40 % of all existing professors will retire and vacate their posts. This situation permits the gentle, but effective opening up of hitherto predominantly unused human resources in teaching and research.” (BMBWK 2004: 6) The original *excellencia* concept foresaw a grant of € 33,880 to each university for the appointment of an additional female professor, with universities free to administer these grants as they

⁴⁸ The Advisory Committee on Women’s Issues (Frauenpolitischer Beirat) at the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research (BMBWK) advises the Minister on academic, scientific and research policies from an equal opportunities for men and women in science and research perspective. Currently seven well known female professors from different disciplines participate in the Committee.

⁴⁹ cf. Bachmann et al. 2004.

saw fit (i.e. the grants were not earmarked for a specific purpose). To qualify for an *excellencia* grant, the appointment of an additional female professor has to increase both the absolute number **and** the overall proportion of female professors in a university. In other words, the appointment of a female professor to succeed an outgoing female professor (e.g. who is retiring) does not qualify for a grant.

An annual budget of € 1,000,000 was allocated to the programme. Funding was provided through the Council for Research and Technology Development, which meant the budget was guaranteed for the duration of the programme and should not be affected by the changes in political strategy that frequently accompany a change in government or the appointment of a new Minister.

An ongoing evaluation process was incorporated from the outset, and the programme was adapted at the end of year one based on the recommendations in the first evaluation report. It subsequently underwent a fundamental redesign in 2007 – partly as a result of the appointment of a new Minister. After three grant application periods (2005, 2006 and 2007), it was adjusted to treat the overall change at the end of the programme (2010) as the determining factor and not the annual change. The goal of this adjustment was to accelerate the results already achieved (a moderate rise in the number of female professors). In addition, the Ministry of Science and Research (BMWF) introduced ambitious targets for each university: grants are now no longer simply paid out as fixed sums for each appointment of an additional female professor; they are also linked to these targets. Three different levels of target achievement were introduced. Universities now receive a basic grant of €32,000 and a target achievement bonus for each additional appointment in a particular application period. The maximum grant paid for each additional appointment is €70,000. A total budget of €6,600,000 has been allocated for the 2008 and 2009 grant periods.

Implementation of excellencia 2005-2007

12 universities submitted grant applications in 2005 (for appointments in 2004), with €575,960 in grants paid to seven universities for a total of 17 appointments. In 2006, 26 eligible applications were received, and a total of €880,880 was paid to 10 universities. In 2007, a total of €643,720 was paid to 10 universities for 19 appointments. On average, two thirds of the available budget was consumed in each of

the first three grant application periods. 16 of the 22 universities in Austria submitted successful applications in the first three years of the programme. Three other universities submitted applications which did not meet the *excellencia* criteria (e.g. because they related to replacement appointments which did not raise the overall proportion of female professors).

Seven universities submitted successful applications in all three periods. These included Austria's four largest universities (University of Vienna, University of Graz, University of Salzburg, University of Innsbruck) and three Arts-based universities (University for Music and Performing Arts Graz, University for Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna). Three universities each submitted two successful applications (Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration, Medical University of Vienna, Medical University of Graz).

These figures alone suggest that there are different chances for participation in the programme depending on the size of a university and the prior proportion of female professors. Larger universities are obviously more likely to appoint new professors and thus have a higher probability of appointing new female professors. Overall, the University of Vienna (by far the largest university in Austria) also received the highest number of *excellencia* grants, although its overall proportion of female professors did not increase most (base figure in 2003: 9.9 %). At the same time, it also becomes evident that those universities with an above average proportion of female professors received comparatively fewer or even no *excellencia* grants either because they appointed no additional female professors (University for Art and Industrial Design Linz, University of Applied Arts Vienna) or because any new appointments were cancelled out by secondments (Vienna University of Technology).

Table 1: Grant Application Results

| | Application 2005 (1.1.04- 31.12.04) | | Application 2006 (1.1.05- 15.10.05) | | Application 2007 (15.10.05- 31.12.06) | | Total | |
|---|--|----|--|----|--|----|-----------|----|
| | A | n | A | n | A | n | A* | n |
| University of Vienna | x | 5 | x | 5 | x | 3 | 3x | 13 |
| University of Graz | x | 4 | x | 3 | x | 1 | 2x | 8 |
| University of Innsbruck | x | 2 | x | 3 | x | 0 | 2x | 5 |
| University of Salzburg | x | 0 | x | 3 | x | 2 | 3x | 5 |
| University of Linz | | | x | 3 | | | 1x | 3 |
| University of Klagenfurt | | | | | x | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Medical University of Vienna | x | 2 | | | x | 1 | 2x | 3 |
| Medical University of Graz | | | x | 2 | x | 2 | 2x | 4 |
| Medical University of Innsbruck | | | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| Graz University of Technology | | | | | x | 1 | 1x | 1 |
| Vienna University of Technology | x | 0 | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| University of Mining Leoben | | | | | x | 1 | 1x | 1 |
| Vienna Univ. of Economics and Business Admin. | x | 1 | | | x | 1 | 2x | 2 |
| Univ. of Natural Resources & Applied Life Sciences | | | x | 1 | | | 1x | 1 |
| University of Veterinary Medicine | | | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| Danube University Krems | | | x | 2 | | | 1x | 2 |
| University for Art and Industrial Design Linz | x | 0 | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| University of Applied Arts Vienna | | | x | 2 | | | 1x | 2 |
| University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna | x | 2 | x | 0 | x | 0 | 1x | 2 |
| University of Music and Performing Arts Graz | | | x | 2 | x | 4 | 2x | 6 |
| Academy of Fine Arts Vienna | x | 1 | x | 0 | x | 3 | 2x | 4 |
| Mozarteum Salzburg | x | 0 | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 11 | 17 | 12 | 26 | 13 | 19 | 20 | 62 |
| Total payments € | 575,960 | | 880,880 | | 643,720 | | 2,100,560 | |
| Budget consumption | 57.6% | | 88.1% | | 64.4% | | 70.0% | |

A = Application submitted, A* = Application successful, n = number of eligible appointments

Source: uni:data; figures calculated by the author.

Furthermore, participation proved relatively difficult for those universities with very high and very low initial proportions of female professors: the two Universities of

Technology (Vienna and Graz) and the University of Mining in Leoben were each allocated a total of two grants. Similarly, of the six Arts-based universities, whose proportions of female professors were all well above average prior to the introduction of the *excellencia* programme, only two were allocated a notable number of grants (the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz received a total of six grants, while four grants were awarded to the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna).

Acceptance of the Programme

An initial analysis of acceptance and key factors of influence was carried out in 2007 by means of document analysis and a series of expert interviews at six selected universities⁵⁰. Interviews were held with the rectors, working committee on equal treatment chairpersons and administrative staff handling grant applications (quality control, personnel, etc.) selected universities to determine the level of acceptance of the programme. In general, the responses revealed that *excellencia* is viewed as a positive programme which supports the equal opportunities efforts already in place in the universities.

There are several reasons for the high level of acceptance of the programme. Firstly, participants are well *aware of the glass ceiling or leaky pipeline phenomenon*, i.e. the decreasing presence of women in the upper echelons of universities. The low proportion of female professors is an issue at all universities; some have already introduced specific measures to address it. These universities view *excellencia* as an additional layer of support which strengthens the steering mechanisms established by the Universities Act 2002.

The designing of the *excellencia* grants as *additional, freely disposable funds* has strengthened the positive attitudes to the programme in universities. The *straightforward handling procedures*, uncomplicated grant application process and clear criteria for eligibility have also contributed to its acceptance, as have the fact that the *allocation of grants is not dependent on the performance of other universities* and the setting of a (long) timeframe for the programme.

⁵⁰ Of the 22 universities in Austria, a total of 6 were selected: University of Vienna, University of Graz, University of Salzburg, Graz University of Technology, Medical University Vienna, University for Art and Industrial Design Linz.

Some of the interviewees commented specifically on the different chances for participation (i.e. that larger universities have a greater chance of being allocated grants than smaller universities simply by virtue of the fact that they make a larger number of appointments). As they see it, this means that grant allocation is not necessarily determined by a change in practices (i.e. the increased appointment of female professors), but is instead a matter of chance or opportunity. As examples for changes in practices we may refer to the University of Graz and the University of Salzburg. Both increased their overall proportions of female professors and, at the same time, appointed high numbers of new female professors. The University of Graz more than doubled its proportion of female professors compared to 2003, with 60 % of its new professorship appointments going to women. However, this success is partly cancelled out by the number of secondments or retirements among female professors. The University of Graz was allocated eight grants, the second highest number (after the University of Vienna). Similar developments can be seen at the University of Salzburg, which was allocated five grants and showed a notable increase in the overall proportion of female professors (from 11.6 % to 16.7 %), with every second new professor appointed being a woman.

It is also considered “unfair” that the allocation of grants is not linked to a university’s success in promoting young scientists and academics. For example, if the proportion of women among those achieving a *habilitation* (i.e. entitled to assume a professorship) is taken as an indication of successful advancement of young scientists and academics, those universities which were particularly successful in this respect actually received no grants at all (Mozarteum Salzburg, University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna).

Different Grant Interpretations; “Incentive” versus “Reward”

Despite the generally positive assessment of the relevance of the programme as such, it has also been the subject of some *criticism*, primarily targeted at the grant. Critics describe it as “bounty money” with a negative aftertaste and criticise the actual amount – dismissing it as too low to trigger any extended effects (“peanuts”).

“It reminds me of the incentives linked to pro- or anti-natalist policies. In reality, they’re one and the same thing. But it fits well with current financial policy.” (I10)

All the interviewees agreed that a grant of € 33,880 was not enough to change appointment practices. They also point out the risk of stigmatization if a woman's appointment to a professorship is associated with the payment of such a grant. They all support the goal of appointing more female professors, but still feel that the primary objective should be to select the person with the best qualifications for the post – regardless of gender. But the interviews also suggest that different parties (project initiators and university staff) view and talk about the programme from different perspectives. The initiators see it as providing an incentive to rectors. In other words, rectors who appoint more female professors receive a “performance bonus” for reaching the agreed targets. The bonus is not attached to a particular appointment, but instead serves as recognition of the university's overall results. In contrast, working committee chairpersons view the programme more as an incentive system intended to encourage rectors to change their practices and to decide in favour of a woman when the candidates for a professorship are equally qualified. However, rectors and vice-rectors do not feel they have the necessary decision-making leeway to do so – an issue that conflicts with the programme goals. In fact, as far as professorship decisions are concerned, the assumption that rectors have little influence over the choice of candidate seems to prevail. In short, some people view *excellentia* as an incentive system, while others see it as a rewards system. The issue here is not the different choice of words, but rather the different understanding of the effects and, thus, the different approaches used to achieve the goals.

Those who view *excellentia* as an incentive system interpret it as a measure targeted at university rectors and offering them a grant as an incentive to change their behaviour, depart from former practices and now only appoint women to professorships. Viewing the programme from this perspective quickly raises the question of whether the actual incentive is large enough to instigate such changes in practice. Another problem that arises with this view is the fact that the direct link between cash and appointments encourages the notion of a “bounty for women”. This opens up the quality versus gender debate and leaves advancement of women as a policy of deficit. Incentive systems also bring with them the problem of “free riders”. Given the actual amounts paid for each additional female appointment, critics maintain that the programme cannot be expected to bring about change. Indeed, it is more widely assumed that universities which were already “pro women” prior to the launch of *excellentia* programme are simply collecting a “windfall”, i.e. receiving grants for doing exactly

what they would have done without such an incentive. This problem does not arise, however, when the *excellencia* grants are viewed as rewards.

Indeed, those parties who view the financial benefits offered by the *excellencia* programme as a reward for achievements in the advancement of women, i.e. a kind of “performance bonus”, put forward a different case. They are far more positive about the programme and do not question the amount of the grant. Instead, they emphasise the fact that the additional funding can be used to finance new projects. Since a level of awareness of this issue is, in most cases, already given, the funds can, in turn, be put towards measures which support the advancement of women. Viewing *excellencia* as a rewards system or performance bonus introduces not only a different time perspective (retrospective not prospective), but also a less direct link between action and effect. The reward for increasing the proportion of female professors can be interpreted more as a bonus, i.e. as a sign that the university’s efforts have been successful and are recognised as such. This provides added support and justification for any existing measures to help advance women. Overall, this view focuses less on the actual amount received and more on the recognition of achievements.

The results of the first round of expert interviews support the hypothesis that *excellencia* makes a *positive contribution to the advancement of women in universities*. This led us to recommend that the key elements of the programme be continued in their present form as a clear sign of the Ministry’s continued support for the goal of increasing the presence of women in higher positions within universities. Nonetheless, we also felt there was room for improvement in the communication strategy. Greater emphasis should be placed on the positive aspects of the programme and the potential benefits of combining it with other measures and targets. This would help to avoid associations with “bounty money”, increase its effectiveness by emphasising the notion of a “reward for achievements” and establish a stronger link to the performance agreements.

Ongoing evaluation: In-depth analysis of implementation and effects (2009-2010)

Potential effects of excellentia

The second phase of the evaluation started in September 2009. This evaluation involves an in-depth analysis of the implementation, relevant basic parameters and effects of the programme at all universities in Austria. *excellentia*'s primary goal is to double the proportion of female professors by 2010. However, an underlying causal effect between the measure and the actual increase in the proportion of female professors cannot be assumed. Indeed, given the provisions of the Universities Act 2002 and the corresponding introduction of development plans and performance agreements, it can be assumed that universities will have continued or expanded their activities to promote women. In this context, the programme can serve to reinforce existing activities and increase levels of awareness, thus having an indirect impact on the appointment of new female professors and the overall proportion of professorships held by women. Furthermore, it is to be assumed that the actual path to professorship (appointment process) includes certain selection mechanisms which lead to the current underrepresentation of women in professorships. Some universities redefined or revised their procedures in the course of implementing the provisions of the Universities Act 2002. *excellentia* can also serve in this context to raise awareness of gender-specific selection mechanisms.

If the *excellentia* programme is to achieve its goal, it is essential that adequate strategies for the advancement of women are developed at each individual university. Consequently, its impact depends heavily on the way it is communicated internally and integrated into other strategies.

Based on the procedures and basic parameters set for *excellentia*, there are a number of areas in which targeted, coordinated efforts in the universities can serve to help to increase their proportion of female professors:

1. Appointment procedure rules and committees: the way appointment procedures are laid down (with a clear, precise process and candidate selection guidelines) can help to promote transparency and objectivity and thus contribute to gender equality in the appointment process.

2. Awareness of gender equality issues: targeted internal communication of the goals can create awareness of discriminatory processes and increase the commitment to achieving these goals in all organisational units. This establishes responsibility for the advancement of women in the units and can be substantiated and monitored through internal target agreements and controlling.

3. Qualified candidates: excellentia funding can be specifically deployed to initiate measures to promote young female academics, thus helping to establish a “broader base” in the long term.

The university management teams play a central role here, as they (co-)design, finance or initiate the majority of measures and thus have a decisive influence on how “pro women” their university actually is.

Current evaluation issues and approach

The in-depth evaluation places primary importance on the following questions:

1. What are the actual appointment procedures used in each university? How have the provisions of the Universities Act 2002 been implemented in each university?
2. Do these provisions have a gender-specific bias?
3. What role do the university’s general strategies and other measures to promote equal opportunities or the advancement of women play in this context?
4. How are the appointment process guidelines applied in practice? What social practices are related to the appointment process?
5. To what extent do these practices differ for women and men?

To answer these questions, documentation relating to appointment process rules and guidelines (statute, plan for the advancement of women) and general strategic focus (statute, performance agreements between the university and the Ministry, intellectual capital report, plan for the advancement of women) will be analysed for all universities in Austria. The evaluation will also ascertain the actual practices used from the perspective of the different parties involved by means of expert interviews with rectors, senate chairpersons, appointment committee chairpersons, working committee on

equal treatment chairpersons and professors (both female and male) appointed after the Universities Act 2002 came into force.⁵¹

One aim is to reveal how the individual appointment processes differ despite the relatively detailed legal provisions that are in place. The evaluation should also examine the different gender-specific effects (that can be) associated with different procedural guidelines. The working committee on equal treatment can, for example, assume a different role from university to university, with its members assigned different functions in the appointment process. Some universities make specific provisions to increase the proportion of female appointments (e.g. setting up search committees, issuing guidelines on how to handle periods of maternity leave or part-time work in applications).

Conclusions

The *excellentia* programme represents an attempt to support and augment the new control instruments introduced by the Universities Act 2002. The Act gave autonomy to the universities and, in doing so, changed the roles of the universities and the Ministry in equal measure. The Ministry and the universities now jointly establish the goals to be met, while the universities themselves determine how they will go about actually achieving them. The Ministry no longer has any direct influence and this, in turn, has a direct effect – particularly on “softer” socio political goals. Although measures to create equal opportunities are called for by the Ministry and set as targets in the performance agreements with the universities, it is up to the latter to determine the form these measures take. The role played by rectors in the appointment of professors takes on a whole new look in the new setting. Rectors are now responsible for such appointments (prior to the Universities Act 2002, professors were appointed by the appropriate Government Minister). The rector’s office is also responsible for the introduction and establishment of effective measures to promote the advancement of women and equal opportunities in the university.

Consequently, the grants established as part of the *excellentia* programme are targeted primarily at the rectors and are intended as rewards for specific achievements. However, the effective implementation of steering mechanisms of this kind requires

⁵¹ Although their actual functions and tasks may differ slightly from university to university, all the groups listed above are involved in some way in the appointment process.

specific, binding, consistent and clearly defined goals. This would appear not to be the case when it comes to goals relating to an increase in the proportion of female professors. Not all performance agreements include a specific target to increase the proportion of female professors by X %. They frequently mention increasing the proportion of female employees or academic staff, but generally do not include a specific target figure. The *excellencia* programme – in which the universities, naturally, participated on a voluntary basis – tacitly “prescribed” such a target figure. And this target was subsequently amended when the programme itself was changed. The evaluation indicates that the deviation between the targets set by the programme and those included in the performance agreements as well as the subsequent changes to the programme have proved problematic.

The situation at the University of Graz is a good case in point. In 2003 (the base year for *excellencia*), 10.6 % of the professors at the University of Graz were women (a total of 15 female professors). The initial *excellencia* concept set the University of Graz the target of doubling its proportion of female professors, i.e. raising it to 21.2 % (or 30 female professors should the total number of professors at the university remain constant). The amended *excellencia* concept raised these target figures to 27.9 % or 38 female professors. To reach this target, over half of the professors appointed in 2008 and 2009 would have to be women. It also clearly exceeds the target agreed in the performance agreement between the Ministry and the University of Graz. This performance agreement specifically defines “Proportion of New Female Professorships” as the target achievement indicator for the socio-political goal “Equal Opportunities” and sets the university the target of raising the proportion of women among new professorship appointments to 30 % by 2009 (from 22 % in 2005).

A further aspect that merits discussion is whether or not the grant should be linked more closely to the practices to be changed. In other words, should the programme not focus primarily on the proportion of women among new appointments (since the overall figures are also influenced by external factors, such as secondments or retirements).

All in all, the insights gained from the implementation of the *excellencia* programme illustrate how difficult it is to challenge and subsequently change established practices which previously favoured men. The professorship appointment process is like a black box full of traditional notions of an “ideal” science in its purest form. Gaining access to its contents is by no means easy, and programmes like *excellencia* cannot, of course,

change this kind of culture. But by systematically analysing existing practices they – and the evaluations that go with them – can raise awareness of the situation and shed a little light into the depths of the black box.

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